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THE IMPATIENCE OF A LAYMAN

by

Hugh A. Studdert Kennedy

Here is a challenge to all who think and care about religion. It is a ringing call to a new reality in religion and life. Like William Lloyd Garrison when he raised his voice against slavery, Mr. Studdert Kennedy cries out to a fundamentally perplexed but still slumberous and apathetic age, "I am in earnest and I *will* be heard."

THE IMPATIENCE OF A LAYMAN was inspired by the recent and already famous book, "The Impatience of a Parson," written by the Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard, sometime Vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London. Like his distinguished brother, the Rev. G. A. Studdert Kennedy ("Woodbine Willie") and "Dick" Sheppard himself, Hugh A. Studdert Kennedy is both an experienced scholar and a gentle, forceful man who cares deeply for people and for religion.

The underlying note of this book is one of manly optimism and amazing common sense. Let mankind have done with its useless preoccupation with evil and pain, and give its whole attention to what is good and joyful. This is not a new creed—it was once proclaimed by Christ himself—but Mr. Studdert Kennedy brings to it a simple practicality, a freshness and a force of personality that are delightful.

The various chapters take up the familiar problems of life and religion. Every chapter is like a gust of clean wind blowing away the cobwebs of doubt and fear which have kept men from realizing the joys of true religion which must be, if they are anything, the joys of life truly discerned. THE IMPATIENCE OF A LAYMAN is a clear challenge to a life of action.

THE CENTURY CO.
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THE IMPATIENCE OF A LAYMAN

Being some thoughts impelled by
"The Impatience of a Parson"

by

Hugh A. Studdert Kennedy

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DEDICATED

TO THE COUNTLESS THOUSANDS

ATHIRST IN THE DESERT OF HUMAN BELIEF,

IN THE HUMBLE HOPE

THAT THIS BOOK MAY PROVE FOR THEM,

AS IT HAS FOR ITS AUTHOR,

A CUP OF COLD WATER IN CHRIST'S NAME.

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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OCT 18 1957

Preface

For thirty years and more I have been schooling myself to patience. The great editor under whose hawk-like eye the early years of my journalistic career were passed was a hard taskmaster in this respect. He knew how to be "impatient" at times. No one I ever knew before or have known since knew better how to "blaze at and blast" an opponent. But he always had himself well in hand and you were always conscious of the fact. He had no patience with impatience that was not cool and calculated. In his sterner moments he would return my grandest efforts to me scored across bluntly with the words, "No sentiment, *please!*" In his softer moments he would take me aside and with a shamelessly disarming kindness remark:

"My son, don't you see that every time you are impatient or sentimental you make a breach in the walls? The fortress of many a grand argument has been taken through just such a breach."

He was right, of course, and his judgment must hold in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of every thousand. But there is the thousandth case.

I have often wondered what the result would be if one let oneself *go* on some question concerning which one cared a great deal and had thought not a little. I have often wondered what was meant to be done with the thousandth case. I have often wondered if the thousandth case, evolved as it should be evolved, would not be worth all the nine hundred and ninety-nine put together. I have often wondered if, after all, the best of the argument was really the surest road to ultimate truth. I have often wondered if the failure of a Lloyd Garrison crying out, "I am in earnest and I *will* be heard," does not, on that rare thousandth occasion, open more eyes than the calculated triumphs of the masters of de-

bate in the nine hundred and ninety-nine that went before it.

> I have become convinced that it is the duty of those who have come to think as I do, no longer to exercise patience, but to speak out. . . . Christianity badly needs rash men who will not flinch from the crispness of religion, nor fear the result of stirring up wasps' nests.

When I first read this passage in one of the early pages of Mr. Sheppard's book "The Impatience of a Parson" it seemed to me too good to be true. I felt as I might have done when as a small boy, wandering by myself along some sandy shore, dreaming of treasure-chests, I had suddenly actually found one. Here was some one who had not only ventured to entertain the same rebel thoughts that I had, but had had the amazing effrontery to act upon them; who not only hankered to say just what he thought, but did.

It had an immediate effect upon me. What follows is the result. No one is responsible for it but myself.

Some of the chapters have already appeared as separate articles in "The Century Magazine,"

"The Forum" and "The Churchman." To the editors of these publications I wish to extend my thanks for their kind permission to reprint these chapters.

HUGH A. STUDDERT KENNEDY

San Francisco,
California,
February 1928

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THE IMPATIENCE OF A LAYMAN

THE IMPATIENCE OF A LAYMAN

Marvel not that I said unto thee,
Ye must be born again.

—JESUS.

Chapter I

THE GREAT DEMAND

I AM CONVINCED
THAT THE WORLD IS
LOOKING FOR A FRESHER,
TRUER AND LARGER VERSION OF
THE RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST AND
THAT IT IS JUSTIFIED IN REQUIRING IT.
—*The Impatience of a Parson.*

IT surely is.

He who desires to see the great monument to the world's failure to understand Christ Jesus, has only to look around. As Mr. Sheppard justly puts it, "What survives and does duty nowadays, through the Churches, as Christianity is a caricature of what Christ intended."

What is to be done about it?

We have been tinkering with it for well nigh nineteen hundred years. We have talked about it and written about it until the few thousand words of the four gospels are like a drop in the ocean. The vast majority of the books that have been made since the birth of Christ have been

made *about* what he said and did. More than half the books in the British Museum are on theology.

To what real purpose has it all been?

Understanding as little as we do; apprehending the real demand of the man Christ Jesus as dimly as we do, yet we know that there is more real life in the "Come unto me" of the Master himself than in all the efforts of the makers of books down through the ages. And yet we go on making books.

Why?

The reason is not far to seek. It is because we have never really *understood*. The moment we *know* a thing we stop theorizing about it, the moment we understand it we *use* it. So long as the source of the Nile remained undiscovered whole volumes were written on the subject; the moment its source was established there was nothing more to say. It is the same with all truth. The moment it is apprehended there is an end to debate. Moreover, it has always the same characteristics, it is simple and narrow in its statement,

but in its application it is infinite. To the question, "What is five times five?" there is only *one* correct answer. It is so narrow that it will not tolerate the smallest deviation, not a millionth of a fraction more or less. Yet in its application it is *infinite*. It is the same from here to the sun and back, and it is infinitely true every step of the way.

We may always know when truth is reached by the immediate replacement of preaching by *practice*.

The fact, therefore, that emerges clearly from the present chaos is that we do not yet understand. There is something lacking in our preaching of Christ to-day which was not lacking nineteen hundred years ago. When we see what we have to do in order to avail ourselves of *all* that Christ offers, we find that we clearly have not the tools wherewith to achieve so much. Something is missing.

Mr. Sheppard speaks again and again in his book of the *full* gospel of Jesus Christ. What is it? The question is not an easy one to answer.

For centuries the churches have been whittling down the offer of Jesus Christ to the point of what they regard as possible attainment, and so tremendous is the power of tradition in all of us that the moment any one ventures to pass beyond these traditional limits, and to think that, beyond them, Jesus *still meant what he said*, he is denounced as a crank or a charlatan.

Let us see if this is not true.

Suppose we test ourselves according to the most approved intelligence-test methods. Suppose we set ourselves a series of questions on the subject, and covenant with ourselves to note faithfully and honestly our *first instinctive "reactions."* Suppose we ask ourselves some such questions as the following. I am not asking them. Jesus Christ is asking them. I am very much among those who must answer.

Here then, as I see it, is what Jesus Christ says to-day to his church in search of a truer and larger vision:

Did I not walk on the water?

Did I not still the tempest ?

Did I not feed the multitude?
Did I not heal the sick?
Did I not raise the dead?
Did I not overcome death?
Did I not ascend into heaven?
Did I not say, I am the way?
Did I not say further that those who believe on me, the works that I do shall they do also?

Did we notice how we felt as we read each question? how we insensibly rebelled against it, how we unconsciously summoned to our aid all the host of learned statements that have been made by numberless divines, all through the centuries, as to *why these demands are not being met?* Did we notice how, as we went along, we found ourselves murmuring, "Oh, that is, of course, pure transcendentalism," and found ourselves viewing each new demand with that vague discredit which is associated with the word *cult?*

Jesus spent most of his time in doing these very things, in proving the complete dominion of man in the so-called physical as well as the mental

realm, and yet they are, *every one of them*, cut clean from out the Gospel as presented by the churches.

Do we include any one of them in our vision of the full gospel of Jesus Christ as it might and ought to be presented to the world to-day?

If we must dismiss that question in the usual way, with an easy laugh, as who would say, "But of course that's nonsense," then there is no use attempting to go any farther, as I see it. *All that the heart of man cries out for lies in these rejected demands.* The yearning cry of the child in the soul of the human race is to-day, as always, "I want to be taken care of *now*."

Here is the test; there is no getting away from it. Imagine a leper, a man sick of the palsy, a woman with an issue of blood, a minister with a dying daughter, a widow with a dead son, a sister with a dead brother coming to us and saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." What would we do? Oh, I know we would help them somehow. We would find some way to comfort them. They would leave us, drying their tears, with their poor

hearts warming a little again. But what a crumb it is compared with the grand bounty of the man who said, "I am the *way*."

What would he have done? Even what he did do. To the leper he would have said, "Be thou clean"; to the woman with the issue of blood, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole," to the dead daughter of the minister, "*Talitha cumi*," to the dead son of the widow, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise"; to the dead brother of a dear friend, "Lazarus, come forth." And it would all have come about even as he directed.

As Mr. Sheppard has so splendidly put it:

> Our Lord never said to those who sought His aid: "Be healed," "Take up thy bed and walk," "Go, and sin no more," without giving them the power to make his words effectual. He never mocked men by giving them counsel which they were not able to put into practice.

Does any one suppose that if we could follow Jesus's example, as he demands that we should, if we could follow it in any degree, that we should

have to state and restate, and state and state again what we believe to be the message of the Christ to the human race? Can any one suppose we should have to go out into the highways and byways and beg them to come in? Do we not *know*, on the contrary, that if we could do a tithe of the things that Jesus did, vast multitudes would arise as one man and come to us from the uttermost parts of the earth?

We *know* that they would.

> The Christian Churches [Mr. Sheppard writes] have lost the hearts of the people, not because they are preaching Christ and men have determined that they will not listen or attend, but because they have *not* preached the full Gospel of Christ, which even now would run like fire over the face of the earth, had we who profess and call ourselves Christians sufficient faith to go right out for His values, accepting them first for ourselves, and then requiring that our own Church should acclaim them as essential for its life.

It is a splendid, courageous statement, but does it not involve for each one of us a demand calling for greater courage still?—not the comparatively easy task of exhorting men and women to

live up continually to their highest thoughts of their highest moments, resting, as we do so, in the odor of sanctity with which tradition has always surrounded such efforts, but the far more difficult task of seeking to restore to the *mutilated* gospel of Jesus Christ those grand passages which to-day, as in Jesus's time, the world must account *foolishness?*

What *is* "the unedited teaching of Jesus" to which Mr. Sheppard so often and so justly recalls us? Not only his words, surely, but his *works* also. Indeed, in his final appeal, he relied on his works rather than his words, insisting that if they would not believe his words they should believe him "for the very works' sake." However much we may shrink from it; however much we may turn from the path "to know the mind of the Lord," sooner or later we shall be compelled to enter the narrow place where our foot will be crushed against the wall and we shall look up and see the angel.

The unedited teaching of Jesus is a *full* salvation, of mind, body, and estate, not at some

indefinite future time but *here* and *now*. There is no lo here or lo there about it, for behold the kingdom of God is *within you*.

Is not the first step, then, in this great task of what Mr. Sheppard so justly calls rethinking religion, frankly,—no matter how *foolish*, for the moment, it may seem,—whole-heartedly and humbly to accept the yoke of the *whole* Gospel?

Would not the true beginning of our task be to listen once again to those questions of Jesus, already set forth, and this time, instead of turning from them with a laugh or a sigh, answer them as alone they can be answered, and *boldly accept the consequences?*

Who has the courage? The world will laugh at us.

To the Greek thought such an attitude will *always* be foolishness; to the Jewish thought it will *always* be a stumbling-block; but to them that believe it will *always* be the power of God unto salvation.

Well, let us suppose that we have done it.

We have now taken our stand, and we have made our answer. "Yes, Lord," we have said, "you healed the sick, you raised the dead, you fed the multitude, you stilled the tempest, you walked on the water, you found your supply in a fish's mouth, and you overcame death, and you finally left behind you all materiality, and you said that you are the way and that the works that you did I could do also. I do not *see* how I can do it, Lord. I do not see even the first step. I am standing here without the city wall, and I have never been here before. I do not know in which direction to turn, but I do know that I have to go on, and that your promise to be with me alway is as sure as your statement, I am the way. Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

Chapter II

WHY CANNOT WE DO IT?

THE GALILEAN HAS
BEEN TOO GREAT FOR OUR
SMALL HEARTS. THAT IS EX-
ACTLY THE TRUTH. RELIGION HAS
BEEN IMPRISONED BY ITS LITTLE JAN-
ITORS WITH THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLICATIONS.
—*The Impatience of a Parson.*

IS it not strange with what feelings we confront this inquiry? How fearfully, like Mr. Sheppard's "little janitors," we look around; how much more as if we were on the road to Endor than on the way to a fuller understanding of life. How tradition tugs at us and prejudice laughs at us, and a long procession of eminent divines formally give us up. *You* the master of circumstances; *you* feeding multitudes; *you* healing sick folk; *you* changing sorrow into joy with a word; *you*—but why go any farther?

And yet, as we stand in doubt, covering our face with our hands, there comes through the storm of protest the voice of the Master, still

saying: "Son, I am the *way*. The works that I do shall you do also. Go out into all the world; preach the gospel to every creature; heal the sick; raise the dead."

Why cannot we do it?

The temptation to run to cover presses us sore. The traditions of the elders hold out such ready hands to us. "Miracles belong to a dispensation now ended." "Miracles were performed by Jesus only to prove the truth of his message, having so proved it there is no need for them any longer." "God in his inscrutable wisdom endowed Jesus with power to perform miracles, but—"

Oh, a plague on it!

We all *know* in our hearts that none of it is true. Really and truly, we are *not* mocked in this scandalous way. Really and truly, our God is *not* a Torquemada and our blessed Master is *not* a torturer of little children. He does not say to those who trust him, "Heal the sick, raise the dead, feed the hungry, be *perfect* even as your Father in heaven is perfect," and then laugh as he sees us weep over a foredoomed failure, and

turn away sorrowful as a girdle-girted tradition whispers soothingly in our ear that he does not mean what he says.

We ought to have none of it.

If ever there was a time for impatience, it is here *at this point* and *now*. Even if we cannot see how he did it, is it not better to affirm with all the faithfulness of which we are capable that we are nevertheless *meant* to do it, and that there *is* a way in which we can do it even though we try and try, and try again, and fail every time, rather than that we should blacken the face of our God with the curse of an inquisitor, or that of the man who loved as never man loved, with the charge of mockery.

Why cannot we do it?

Well, let us see if there is any light anywhere. "Frankly," Mr. Sheppard says, "I desire to see the values of organized Christianity turned upside down, believing they are now very largely wrong side up."

But if this is to be done would not the result have to be a *complete* revolution, something *en-*

tirely new? Ought we not to *expect* absurdity? Ought we not to expect that the effect upon us would be similar to that of waking from a dream in the process of which the most solid dream conviction goes up at once in smoke, and an existence of which we were, in the dream, utterly unconscious becomes a simple fact instantly taken for granted.

Supposing we try to come to it, you and I, standing without the city. Supposing we try to see if we cannot catch a glimpse of that understanding which Jesus had in its fullness, an understanding which, now as then, must ultimately open our ears to the heavenly anthem, "Lift up your head, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." The first thing to do, as I see it, is to find out what Jesus really did say of man.

What did he say of him?

He said he was the son of God. "I go to your Father and my Father." He held out his hands to man as his *brother.* He bid man be perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. When mor-

tal man was sick he healed him; when he was hungry, fed him; when he was sorrowful, comforted him; when he was dead, raised him to life again. And he said to his followers through time and eternity—again must it be put on record—"I am the way . . . the works that I do shall ye do also." Was he mocking us? Or did he really mean what he said?

Have you ever wondered how he did it? Have you ever prayed to know, and prayed and prayed and prayed, as I have, as we all have prayed? Of course you have.

But have you ever *watched* his healing, healing in the fullest sense of the word, proving the eternal harmony of life by causing its inharmonies to vanish away as the mist before the rising sun?

Let us do it, let us watch him again—carefully.

A man comes to him with a withered arm. Does he ask to see it? Does he examine it? Does he even recognize it as being withered? Does he not, rather, speak to this man as one who has an arm as it must be in the sight of God, infinite

Good? What does he say to him? He simply tells him to *stretch it forth;* and behold, it is restored whole as the other.

It is the same with the feeding of the five thousand. He will have none of the lie of any lack in God, Good, infinite Abundance, and he tells the people to sit down. It is the same with the tribute money. It is the same at the grave-side of Lazarus, where his prayer was not a petition but a grand affirmation: "Father, I knew that thou hearest me always."

What does it all mean? It means, surely, this: *that to the mind that was the Mind of Christ Jesus the material world with all its absurdities of twice two is five, its sorrow, sin, sickness, and death was an unreal shadow, the mist that "went up from the earth"; behind the nothingness of which he saw, in its forever perfection, the spiritual universe of God's creating, at all times ready to be revealed.*

"I am unclean," cried the leper.

"Son, be of good cheer, for man is not unclean; he is the son of God." And immediately

the man is so revealed, his flesh becomes again as the flesh of a little child.

"We are hungry and in the wilderness, and many of us faint by the way; we are without food."

"O my sons and daughters, be of good cheer, for man is never without food; all that the Father hath is his. Make the men sit down."

"We are in jeopardy. Carest thou not that we perish?"

"O ye of little faith, man cannot perish or be in jeopardy, for before Abraham was man is." And there was a great calm.

And so we might go on—is it not so?—all through those years of ministry, and see this representative Man, Christ Jesus, brushing aside the so-called laws of matter, and revealing the eternal mandate of Mind, the eternal harmony of life, from the infinitesimal to the infinite.

"There is happiness, there is joy, there is peace. Or, rather, there would be for me if I had the courage, for you if you had the courage, actually to attempt to follow Christ."

The words are Mr. Sheppard's. He will remember them.

Why have we not the courage?

Because we are still believing that there is another power, another *reality* opposed to God. We are still recreant to Jesus's teaching: "God is a spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." We are still puzzling over the lie that twice two is five, instead of seeing the only thing that *is*, the only thing that matters; namely: twice two is four. We are still believing in this material existence as the *reality of existence*, instead of seeing in it only the fleeting mortal interpretation—often grotesque—of the great facts of the Eternal Mind. We are still believing that the same fount can send forth sweet water and bitter. We are still interpreting activity as the growth of a flower, or a dog fight; still interpreting relationship as love and hate; still interpreting the unfoldment of existence as sin, disease, and death as well as uprightness, health, and life. We are still trying to work with contraries, still diving into the shallows of

human belief, instead of rising into the fullness of the Mind of Christ.

Why?

Because we have not the courage to stand as Lloyd Garrison stood when, right in the midst of triumphant slavery, he said, "I am in earnest and I *will* be heard."

Why cannot we stand, you and I and all of us—stand where Jesus stood and, right in the midst of the triumphant slavery of materialism, with its absurd lies of sin, sorrow, sickness, poverty, disease, and death say, and mean it, "I am in earnest and *will* be heard"? I am in earnest when I say that God is Spirit and God is Good and *God is All.* I am in earnest when I say that if God is All, there can be *nothing* outside of His Allness and that anything that does appear to be outside of His Allness is what Jesus declared it to be —*a lie and the father of it.* I do not care how much men may scoff at me, how much they may try to overwhelm me with proofs to the contrary, how much they may flaunt before me the seemingly so concrete sorrows of the world, its wars,

its pestilence, its shameless cruelty, its sin, its sickness, its death and worse than death. I take my stand where Jesus stood, and I say that my God is of purer eyes than to behold even this mirage of evil, and that man is perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect.

And I stand and wait.

And I know as I stand and stand that the mind that was the Mind of Christ Jesus will at last be revealed to me, and that I, as I be lifted up, shall draw all men unto me. In other words, shall see all men rise, shall see the world around me approximating ever more closely to *reality:* the sorrowful gaining comfort, because sorrow is no part of God; the hateful gaining love; the weary gaining rest; the angry gaining peace; the sick gaining health.

Is not this the "greater religion" that we all are longing for—the *full* salvation, not only of soul and spirit but of body also, the whole Christ, the undivided garment?

Is it not worth at least *trying*, this prayer without ceasing, this unhesitating giving of the

lie, at all times and in all circumstances, to everything that is unlike God? And is it not the Christ method? "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth *nothing.*" The *lie* and the father of all lies.

"I know that my redeemer liveth, and that *in my flesh*"—that is, surely, in the power of the Christ as made manifest in the healing of my flesh, the harmonizing of my sense of life—"I shall see God." I know that God's man is happy, is joyful, is abiding and abounding in health, and is forever at peace; *and I know that I am that man.*

The result is sure; for as it was in the days of Æneas, so it is now, and always: "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole."

Chapter III

THE HARDEST SAYING OF THEM ALL

I FEAR THAT IF OUR LORD
WERE TO COME AGAIN, HE WOULD
BE COMPELLED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT
INSTITUTIONAL RELIGION HAD CORRECTED
MANY OF HIS VALUES AND FORGOTTEN MANY
BESIDES. IT IS DOUBTFUL WHO WOULD BE THE
MORE SURPRISED; HE AT OUR VALUES, OR WE AT HIS.
—*The Impatience of a Parson.*

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." This must be a difficult chapter for the reason that it must deal with a question in the essence of which the human mind—the "enmity against God"—Spirit, recognizes its own destruction, "the flesh profiteth nothing." We instinctively fight against such a contention to the last ditch. Let us again watch ourselves as we talk about it. We shall find rising up within us nothing like the healthy stimulus of disagreement; nothing like that friendly haste to combat to which we are accustomed in all our discussions; nothing like what Mr. Sheppard

so well describes in his book as the "thrust and parry of debate." We shall be conscious of a growl of anger, of a hateful sense of *unreality*, of a blighting wave of contempt, of all that impotent impatience which sweeps over us when what we regard as a sop of fantasy is thrown in the face of dire need. The only way we can ever down this beast within us, this flesh lusting against the spirit, is to approach the question through the Mind of Christ Jesus.

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." It is an inexorable saying and many of Jesus's first disciples found it so. Let us examine it more closely.

The sixth chapter of John, in which the words occur, is generally conceded to cover the turning-point in Jesus's ministry. When the chapter opens he is at the height of his popularity. Great multitudes were following him from all parts of the country; without staying to make any provision for their journey, they would leave everything, as the great throng passed through

their town or village, and join themselves with the nearest company. Jesus had fed them, five thousand of them, in the wilderness. So carried away were they that they would have taken him by force and made him a king.

It was a period of tremendous fruition. After feeding the multitude, that same night, he had walked on the water. Multitudes of sick people had been healed. It must have been clear to him that if his ministry was to bear fruit, if his message was really to be understood, and not overwhelmed in an hysterical adoration of himself as a wonder-worker, he must bravely face the terrible task of explaining how it was done.

And so, next day, when the multitude, augmented now out of every town and village roundabout, took ship and crossed the lake to find him, he evidently determined to make a stand. They sought him not because of the glory of God, which he revealed, but because of the loaves and fishes with which they had been filled. He would be straight with them. Thereafter followed one of the most amazing dialogues, surely,

the world has ever overheard. Jesus speaking in parables, his only possible hope, the only possible means by which he could expect to penetrate the opacity of the human mind and let in a ray from the divine Mind—Jesus speaking in parables, and the multitude *taking him literally*. The bread of God coming down from heaven and giving life unto the world. "Lord, evermore give us this bread." "I am the bread of life. Eat of this bread, drink of this blood, and you will not hunger or thirst ever again." "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" And they are striving among themselves. Jesus does not hesitate. It is now or never. He makes no concession. He goes farther. Unless they eat his flesh and drink his blood they have no life in them, but if they do they will live forever.

There was the whole thing at last, in a nutshell, the immemorial struggle between the fact of Spirit and the fiction of matter. Unless they caught a glimpse of the reality which moved forward as if matter did not exist, which, with sure mastery, used it, matter, merely as the script

in which the eternal will of God was written, bending it, welding it, wielding it, forcing it to declare nothing except good, and, in the last resort, to vanish into silence and native nothingness —unless they caught some glimpse of this they had no life in them, for what they regarded as life was no more than a dream when one awaketh or a watch in the night.

Even his disciples, when at last they began to catch a glimpse of what he was driving at, when they began, at any rate, to see that in the opinion of the Master their own ecstatic emotion and that of the multitude had no part or lot in the future as he saw it, they began to say among themselves that it was a hard saying and to wonder who could hear it.

Jesus did not relent for a moment. Did this offend them? What would they do if they should see the Son of man rise triumphant above all materiality, and take his place where he was before, before the mist had gone up from the earth? And then came the great final summing up, already quoted. Spirit alone is the quickener;

the flesh—the lie, the liar and the father of it—profiteth nothing.

You remember what the outcome was of this stand, how from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. They could not "make the grade." There were, however, a few who dumbly hung on. Their eyes were still holden, but dimly they discerned the great fact that nowhere else was there any hope.

"Will ye also go away?"

"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

The human mind does not change. It was enmity against God in the days of Jesus and Paul, and it is enmity against God to-day, and the "wretched man" within us all is the human mind, the enmity against God, the flesh lusting against the spirit, going out with fire and sword to slay and to crucify the real truth-bringer, he who says and says again, "It is the spirit that quickeneth. . . . God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

To those who would worship through the medium of matter the human mind holds out ready hands; it welcomes a thousand delectable forms; it will consent to and approve of any kind of "spirituality," so long as it is in some way, no matter how slight, linked with the flesh. As a great writer has well put it, "The determination to hold Spirit in the grasp of matter is the persecutor of Truth and Love."

Now let us face this out. On pages 115 and 116 of his book, Mr. Sheppard writes:

> What the individual and the Church both need is a new reality, and maybe before either can get that both must go down into the darkness of reverent doubt—Christ is there; sometimes I think he is specially there.

It is a great statement. I have read it again and again. What we need is *a new reality*. Really, as I see it, the whole dire need of the world is summed up in that sentence. The main trouble is that no man can envisage this new reality until he is able and willing to lose his life; not the life of the body but the human mind's concept of life, in which the flesh is the *solid reality* and Spirit,

God, Mind, what you will, the power that guides this pen, or whirls that world, is a dream.

The great demand of the hour, and of every hour, is to reverse this thinking. Henceforth Spirit must be *substance* to us.

It will be hard going, hard and bitter going, and we shall rebel every step of the way; we shall count ourselves rebels and ingrates; we shall pass through dark nights of remorse and, oftentimes, a weary sense of disloyalty to old allegiances. Every now and again there will descend upon us a sense of unreality like that of a drunken man awakening from his cups. Worse still, the appeal of the sense of life we are leaving behind will call out to us, tugging at our heartstrings, like the sound of a Christmas carol born on the frosty air, and only by faith shall we be able to know that these are but the troubles of this present time, which are not to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. *The real conflict is always in the realm of mind.*

Let us examine it more closely, and forgive me

if I seem to be almost brutal. In the chapter "As Having Nothing," Mr. Sheppard writes: "There is nothing that I fear more than the look of sorrowful disappointment that assuredly must come into the eyes of my Lord when at that hour He looks upon me and says, as indeed He may, 'Not yet, my son.' "

When I read this my heart sank a little. I felt as some one might who, years afterward, passes by the scene of a great struggle and wonders if he really has won. "The look of sorrowful disappointment in the eyes of my Lord." Have we ever thought how much, how incredibly much, of the comfort of religion derives directly from the call and recall of the golden age of childhood, the beautiful, irresponsible dreams in which we wandered beside still waters, holding the hand of the good Shepherd, and asking him about the sheep and the lambs? Have we ever thought of how they persist with us, and how often, when we have carried on the struggle with life about as far as we can bear, we conjure up for our comfort some well-loved scene in which we play an

actual part, with our vague but wonderfully beautiful vision of the Master coming to us and speaking to us as we would have him come and speak?

And yet is there really any hope for the world until it transfers its affections from the finite person of Jesus—the flesh that profiteth nothing—to the infinite personality of the Christ?

Think of it for the moment. With what body do they come?

My own father—will he come as the young man I never knew; as the man of middle years, as I remember him in my childhood; or as the blessed old man I remember so clearly at this moment and loved so well? The look in the eyes of my Lord. Bitter as it may be for us to say so, yet must it not be true that so long as we are expecting *that* kind of meeting our eyes will be holden to the infinite glory of the reality? So long as we are looking for mother and brethren, so long must we be unable to say with the Nazarene, and to understand what he means "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which

is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

And what is the reality? What is Jesus the Christ to us? What is that real presence which is his, which eye hath not seen nor ear heard and which cannot enter into the heart of material man? Is not the love which he manifested to the world—his own special manifestation of the Father, infinite Love—is not this his own special *personality?* And is it not the same with his kindness, his tenderness, his patience, his compassion, his grand steadfastness, his power and strength and unhesitating decision, his infinite seventy times seven forgiveness? Do we need a *body* to interpret it to us? Must we forever cry with Thomas, "Unless I see and touch I will not believe"? Is there any mistaking our Lord? When he is spread abroad in our hearts do we not know it? When, in the light of it, we do as he did, "go to the Father," the source of it all, do we not realize, as he did, "Father, I knew that thou hearest me always"?

What the world is crying out for is not a wist-

ful escape but a joyous entry, a joyous entry not into the "lo here or lo there" but into the kingdom of heaven which is within, into the infinite ever-presence of infinite Life and Love and Truth, of Spirit, God, into the "city" wherein is nothing that defileth nor maketh a lie. In this real presence which knows its own, can we ever think of ourselves as hearing so chill a response as "Not yet, my son," when there rises forever to high heaven the assurance of the Infinite, "Son, thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine"?

In this chapter "The Galilean Too Great," Mr. Sheppard very aptly quotes Dean Inge: "The Florentines flattered Savonarola until they found he meant business, then they burnt him." But, then, the human mind always does this, *must* always do it if it is to be saved from its own destruction. Are we sure that we are innocent? We bow our heads when some one tells us that God is All-in-All and that he is Spirit and that man is His image and likeness, we bow our heads and say, "Amen," until we find that he means business, *and then we burn him.*

Let any minister of the church come, saying, "Jesus walked on the water, he stilled the tempest, he fed the multitude, he healed the sick, he raised the dead, he overcame death, he ascended into heaven, he said, I am the way, and the works that he did should we do also, *come let us set about it*," and just see how we rush to burn him.

Here is, surely, a point of departure for a veritable apotheosis of impatience. As Mr. Sheppard very justly puts it:

> Even while men hardly realise it, they welcome the Institution because it asks much less of them than the Christ would ask. So those who desire to go at least some way with the Founder of Christianity are inclined to escape from too strenuous a journey by sheltering themselves behind the walls of the Institution which is inclined to temper the gale of the Spirit of God. Unhappily the small hearts of men have all too often accepted the mild requests of the Institution as giving them some excuse for escaping from the severer demands of their Lord.

True indeed, and yet the fullest demand that could be made to-day by those faithful thinkers

who are urging upon the churches the acceptance of the unedited gospel of Jesus Christ, falls so far short of the full demand, if Jesus really meant what he said, as to be but a shadow of the reality. The cry of the sick, the sorrowing, the broken in mind, in body, in estate goes up from the earth as it has from the beginning, and there is no voice nor any that answer, no one who speaks with *authority*. Yet the instructions of the Founder of Christianity are clear and explicit. "Preach the gospel to all the world; heal the sick; raise the dead: freely ye have received, freely give."

What are we going to do about it? What *can* we do about it? The Ancient Mariner of an inexorable conscience has us by the coat sleeve. We cannot break away. The wedding-feast of the Institution, all set anew, with the haunting music of an immemorial past, calls to us; but we are held and must listen.

Yes, we must listen. We must brace ourselves for "that kind of communion," as Mr. Sheppard puts it, "in which the isolated human heart hears

the Christ saying directly to itself: 'Thou art the man. . . . 'Go and do thou likewise!' "

How can we shoulder such a burden? a burden so much greater than that from which we are already shrinking to-day?

There is only one way, and it is the way of *foolishness.* It is to know that *there is no burden;* not by a process of some mental jugglery, not by the murmuring of some shibboleth, not by mesmerizing ourselves into believing something that we know to be untrue, but by claiming our birthright as the sons of God.

Man is not material, he is spiritual. Here and now he lives and moves and has his being in God, Spirit, infinite Life. His apparently material surroundings are but his *mode of consciousness,* destined to change as it is instructed out of itself by his vision of the spirit of God, of *reality,* destined one day to be found where Jesus ultimately found it, at the right hand of the Father, in the full freedom of life, fettered no longer with the bonds of a material consciousness.

It is this new and true view of life reversing

the accepted order, patiently, persistently, unceasingly claiming for Spirit the dignity of *substance*, and insisting that matter take its place as shadow—it is this new and true view of life which can alone meet the full demand of our Lord and Master, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, revealing happiness and peace, love and joy, eager instant loving kindness, the harmony of the kingdom as the eternal ever present *fact* where for so many dreary ages has appeared to be nothing but the misery of outer darkness.

Chapter IV

HAPPINESS AND LIFE

IT IS THE FRESHNESS,
THE VITALITY, THE STRENGTH
AND THE RADIANCE OF CHRISTIAN-
ITY, THAT HAS BEEN DAMPED DOWN
IN THESE LATTER DAYS, WHICH THE
WORLD NOW NEEDS IF IT IS TO BE REBORN.
—*The Impatience of a Parson.*

AFTER all that has been said up to this, we should, it seems to me, come without further delay to the great question of practical application. That much enduring man, the man in the street, to whom Mr. Sheppard refers, has indeed a tremendous cause for complaint. He may well round on me at this juncture with some such reproach as this: "What is the use of all this to me? The argument may be impeccable, but so, as I recall it, is the argument which Archimides advanced three thousand years ago to prove that the angles of any triangle are equal to two right angles. Yet it means nothing in my life save a disagreeable memory of an early struggle. I am tired of

theories, tired of promises, tired of deferred payments. I want practice; I want fulfilment; I want cash; or I want to turn my back on it all forever. There is only one question that interests me now where religion, as the world calls it, is concerned, and that is—will it work?"

Well, there is much to be said for such a position. And so let us go to it; let us see if it will work; let us go straight to the real heart of the whole matter, to the question of happiness; for if desire is prayer, then the desire for happiness is the ultimate prayer of the human race. Such a statement is true because it rests on the inevitable. Happiness is harmony, there is no other definition which so completely covers the ground, and harmony is the law of Principle, of God, of *That Which Is*. The struggle, therefore, must always be to come into conformity with this law, because any departure from it must result in loss of harmony; in other words, in unhappiness.

There is no use our attempting to fool ourselves. Happiness, whether it be a true sense or a false sense, is always the grand objective of

human life. The ascetic who mortifies the flesh does so because he believes it will bring him happiness in the future; the sensualist who indulges the flesh does so because he believes it will bring him happiness now.

Ah take the Cash, and let the Credit go.

So he puts it, and imagines that between himself and the ascetic a great gulf is fixed. And yet they are together in this, that they are both searching for the same thing—happiness.

The seeking for happiness is, however, one thing; the finding of it quite another. We never have to be told when we find it. We always know. Rousseau, the man who of all men, later in life, was so cast down, has well described it. Writing of the nine years he spent at Annecy, and the happiness which there seemed to be always his, he says:

How tell what was neither said nor done nor even thought, but tasted only and felt, with no object of my felicity but the emotion of felicity itself! I rose with the sun, and I was happy; I went to walk, and I was

happy; I saw "Maman," and I was happy; I left her, and I was happy. I rambled through the woods and over the vine-slopes, I wandered in the valleys, I read, I lounged, I worked in the garden, I gathered the fruits, I helped at the indoor work, and happiness followed me everywhere. It was in no assignable thing; it was all within myself; it could not leave me for a single instant.

Well, in the presence of so much, most of us, burdened and rendered fearful by the teaching and experience of centuries, are distrustful. It is too good to be true; too good to last; it will end badly. Man was born to sorrow as sparks fly upward. And yet in our heart of hearts we feel that it *ought* to be true, and, sometimes greatly daring, we go deeper still and declare that it *is* true; that, all the evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, all the precepts of orthodox faith, whether it be of Confucius or Brahma or the would-be exponents of the Christ through the ages, nevertheless the real man, born of the real woman, is not born to sorrow as sparks fly upward, but to a joy unspeakable, here and now realizable, the inevitable outcome of the oneness of Father and Son, of the insepara-

bleness of Principle and its idea, the forever at-one-ment of God and man in His image and likeness.

As Mr. Sheppard justly puts it, "Men rightly believe that Christ came to offer mankind full, happy and carefree life—'an overflowing vitality'—they cannot understand this lack of natural joy that seems to them to be attached to the profession of Christianity."

Why should there be this lack? The reason is not far to seek. For centuries mortal man has been attempting to conform his conception of the Creator to his material surroundings. In all his feeling after God he has taken the world as he knows it, life as he sees it, history as it is expounded to him as the great *realities*, into the outrageous contradictions and enormities of which his concept of God has to be made to dovetail. It is, of course, a hopeless task.

I remember once, years ago, discussing this question with a friend through a long summer afternoon's walk. And I remember specially a remark he made to me as we parted. "I could

never," he said, "worship a god who created a cat and a mouse." I thought of it often afterward, and I have been thinking of it in a measure ever since. It seemed, at first, to present an insoluble problem, and the more I thought of it the more impossible it seemed to be. No, I could not worship a god who created a cat and a mouse. And that was only the beginning of rebellion. I could not worship a god who was responsible for all the other thousands of cat-and-mouse enormities of so-called human life, the slow tortures or the swift pain of disease, the agonies of bereavement, the fears of poverty, the outrageous misery of hope deferred or balked or shattered.

There was no good speaking to me of good purposes or inscrutable designs. The whole kingdom of *heaven* within me, where Jesus Christ said it was, was in an uproar, and would have none of it. If *I* were omnipotent would *I* fashion creatures with a bias toward sin, and then punish them for falling into it? If *I* were omnipotent would *I* fashion creatures capable of dreaming unspeak-

able things, and then dash them to earth on the threshhold of achievement? If *I* were omnipotent would *I* cripple little children, or seek to redeem an erring soul by means of a cancer? Why, of course I would not! *Then, equally of course, my God would not.*

From that the next step was easy—and is easy. Of course my God *does* not, and my God must be the God of all the earth, and "shall not the God of all the earth do right"?

But here they are still, apparently, the whole ghastly tribe of them: the crushed genius; the crippled child; the broken; the sick and the sorrowful; the aimless, endless round; the birth; the growth; the maturity; the decay. What can we do about it? How can we save the face of God in the presence of so much blackness?

Well, it is not difficult. The other day I was turning over the pages of an old Bible, now too worn for regular use, but the constant companion of many wrestlings years ago, and I came across this familiar passage, deeply scored, and remembered how again and again I had come

back to it with this thought: "Surely here is the key to it all." Here it is:

> Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

There is no truth in him—all a lie, a myth, a mirage of false consciousness. And so when, on the eve of his crucifixion, Jesus declared to his disciples: "Behold the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me," he meant, surely that when the *lie* presented itself to him, no matter what its guise, it was immediately detected and dismissed.

In the presence of a like understanding, however slight and faltering, happiness and *all the freedom it implies*, freedom from sin, sorrows, sickness and death, from everything unlike God, begins to be seen as something *independent of circumstances*, for there is no way in which unhappiness can appear to the consciousness which recognizes nothing but the presence of good, that

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can say with understanding: "Father, I knew that thou hearest me always." As this understanding grows in strength and clearness it will steadily become more dynamic. *It will work.* It will give us *immediately* the substance of things hoped for, forgiving—wiping away all our sense of—iniquities; healing all our diseases; redeeming our life from destruction; crowning us with loving kindness and tender mercies; satisfying our mouth with good things; renewing our youth like the eagle's; in a word, establishing within us *a change in consciousness* or, as Mr. Sheppard expresses it, "a new reality."

And so we, as we are lifted up, shall draw all men unto us; shall see all men rise, until in the end, with the son at last seen as perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect, happiness will be recognized as eternal because founded on the understanding which is born of God.

Happiness, then, is an infinite fact of eternal life, not only independent of circumstances but capable of being experienced in no matter what surroundings. A recognition of this fact will, and

inevitably *must*, finally dominate circumstances, mold them into line with Truth, and bring every thought and word and work and circumstance, whether of sin or sickness, want or woe, into subjection to Christ,—the truth of being,—until man, the reflection, is no longer marred by the dark glass but sees and *experiences himself* as he is forever in the sight of God.

How far is this from the accepted view!

A well-known churchman writes in a recent issue of the "Cambridge Review":

> We fail to reach any reasonable view of this world if we consider that its purpose is to provide happiness. Creation has largely disregarded pleasure. Pleasure can afford no clue to the meaning of the world, which is confessedly an imperfect world. If, however, we regard the world, not as a workshop for creating happiness, or a home to enjoy it, but as a workshop for creating goodness, beauty, truth, then many difficulties disappear.

And then later:

> In the world goodness can begin to grow. Indeed, it has been well said that an imperfect world is necessary to produce goodness. And such a view of the world is

alone consistent with the idea of a universe, not a multiverse. It alone enables us to see one mind ruling over all—and one purpose working its way out in the world: Man and his surroundings uniting to create things of eternal value. But to create these eternal things, to produce goodness involves struggle, pain, cross. It is by the daily dyings that we mount from the lower experiences to the higher.

Well, with the utmost deference to this writer, with the most heartfelt realization of the difficulties in the way of dealing with such a subject at all, and with the most profound gratitude that he has dealt with it and that the great discussion is thus kept moving, I must submit that his summary of the matter is chop logic and another unconscious contribution to that blackening of the face of God which seems to have been the special province of so many splendid, devoted Christian writers since the earthly voice was stilled of him who declared that he had come that his followers might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.

If there is one thing that Jesus did not preach it was the gospel of suffering; if there is one thing

he did preach it was the gospel of happiness. The difficulty, as it seems to me, has always arisen from that inveterate vanity of the undisciplined human mind, which leads it to the conclusion that where it would find wretchedness and misery, there wretchedness and misery must surely reside, and that where it would find joy and rejoicing, there must surely be the realm of all bliss.

And yet all history is a confutation of such a theory—from the toiling peasant who sings at his work, to the millionaire I read about the other day who shot himself in despair amid the loneliness of his great possessions.

All down the centuries the world has been taught to believe that Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and it has believed it because it could not conceive of any one's passing through one tithe of what Jesus passed through, without being sorrowful and grieved past words to express. And yet we know very well, when we pause for a moment to think, that the man who knew enough to heal the sick,

who on the eve of the crucifixion could declare that he had overcome the world, who realized that he was living and moving in perfect accord with the Infinite—we know that such a man must have been happy beyond anything that we can conceive of as happiness.

In an article which appeared in "The Churchman" some time ago my brother, G. A. Studdert Kennedy, wrote, speaking of martyrs:

> No martyr asks for pity or needs it. If he is genuine and sincere, he needs our pity less than any man alive, for he is very near to God. I do not pity any one of them. I envy the honest ones—they must be very happy. I am glad for the dishonest ones; it may bring them to their senses.

I envy the honest ones; they must be very happy. Of course they must be; and not happy in any vicarious, mustard-pot fashion, as who would say, "My reward is hereafter," but happy as the valleys that are thick with corn.

For centuries, of course, there have been those who preached the gospel of happiness, but it has always been the happiness of Mark Tapley and

not the happiness of Jesus which saw through the fraud and past it, and finally saw it not at all, though to all the world it seemed to be just as much present as ever.

That is surely the secret of the whole matter. The writer in the "Cambridge Review" insists that if we regard the world not as a workshop for creating happiness or a home to enjoy it but as a workshop for creating goodness, beauty, truth, then many difficulties disappear. And yet the fact must surely be that any one who is creating goodness, beauty, and truth, no matter what he may *appear* to be going through, cannot fail to be happy; or if he does so fail, then that failure must be proof to him that he is not creating what he thinks he is creating. In every department of human experience, save in that most important of all departments, the human life, the presence of pain or inharmony of every kind is recognized, not as a virtue but as a fault *quite incapable of producing any good results* and placing its perpetrator under an immediate obligation to get back into line as quickly as may be with the

principle he has violated, if he would regain the inevitable reward of being in accord with Principle, namely, harmony or happiness.

Yet the writer of the "Cambridge Review" article goes on to tell us that an imperfect world is necessary to produce goodness; in other words, —there is no escaping it,—that evil is necessary to produce goodness, that a crooked rule is necessary to produce a straight line, that the false weight alone can produce the true measure. He further insists that this strange topsyturvy state of things is proof that one Mind rules over all.

Neither is that all, for he maintains that the production of anything of eternal value involves struggle, pain, the cross. Well, maybe it very often does, but the great fact to remember is that *it need not*. The engineer who builds his bridge need not miscalculate the strength of his girders or the force of the current or the flow of the stream; such struggles and pains and crosses never help but only hinder the accomplishment of his task. There is no virtue in them, and they cer-

tainly are not necessary to produce that "goodness" which is represented by a perfectly constructed bridge.

Nevertheless it needs to be remembered that to the totally ignorant onlooker the engineer would often *seem* to be making mistakes when he was not, to be up against all manner of struggles and pains and crosses when he was in reality up against nothing of the kind. The onlooker might see this man blowing rocks sky-high with dynamite, wrestling with girders in midstream, cutting down trees, wrecking houses, toiling and sweating, a man of sorrows, truly, and acquainted with grief, and yet a man, really, who was winning and achieving and, as a consequence, supremely *happy*.

So it was with Jesus. So it can be with us, here and now, when we catch a glimpse of what Jesus saw in its fullness; namely, that happiness, like life, like health, like all else that is good is not something to be *produced* but an abiding reality, always present, always the only *real* presence. "Resist the devil and he will flee from

you." Give the lie to the lie, and claim the *fact* of being. Go on claiming it, continuing instant in prayer, and then, if not "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," yet, none the less surely, will one day come that *change of consciousness* in which happiness is found to be in no assignable thing but all within ourselves and never overthrown for a single instant. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. . . . And your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one [no material condition, surely] taketh from you."

Chapter V

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

¶WHY, THEN, IS THERE SO MUCH EVIL IN GOD'S PROCESS WHICH WE CALL NATURE? WE CAN NOT SAY. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL BAFFLES US. ¶THERE ARE MANY PARTIAL ANSWERS. ¶WITHOUT EVIL THERE WOULD BE NO "SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT." THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN WOULD BE PEOPLED BY AUTOMATA. ¶PRESUMABLY GOD ATTACHES SUPREME VALUE TO FREE SPIRITS WHO HAVE STRUGGLED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS. ¶HE WISHED TO MAKE MEN THEMSELVES WORTHY OF ETERNAL LIFE.

—*The Bishop of Birmingham.*

¶NO FATHER EVER WON THE LOVE OF HIS CHILDREN BY THREATENING THEM WITH PUNISHMENTS.

—*The Impatience of a Parson.*

THE origin of evil has been the speculation of the ages, and to the sincere believer it has always presented a problem from the baffling presence of which he could fly for refuge and consolation only to the realm of faith. "We cannot say. The problem of evil baffles us. We hope and be-

lieve that some day it will be explained to us. Meanwhile, we must try to be satisfied with the best explanation we can come by."

But the trouble about most explanations is that in our heart of hearts we do not believe them. We know they are not true. We know it is not true—we know, indeed, it is *impossible*—that evil should ever be necessary for the achievement of good. We know there is none good save One that is God. We know that God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. We know that in Him we live and move and have our being. We know that He fills all space. We know that if we take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea we shall find Him there before us, and that if we make our bed in hell it will be the same. We know that He is Spirit; we know that he is wisdom, and He is Truth and Life and Love. We know that we cannot conceive of any limit to His power for goodness; and we know that this must have all power in heaven and earth, for there can be no power opposed to omnipotence. We know that our every effort and the efforts of

all our fellows are devoted to the lessening of suffering, to the binding up of the broken-hearted, and the setting at liberty of them that are bound, and we know that as men and women and peoples and nations we are steadily moving farther and farther away from the idea of suffering imposed as a means of discipline.

And yet through all the ages there have been those—and they are still a great multitude—who not only see nothing outrageous but, on the contrary, find comfort in the Bishop of Birmingham's statement, "Without evil there would be no 'spirits of men made perfect.'"

Yet evil, on this basis, is the great ministering angel, and Paul was wrong when he declared that the damnation of those was just who declared that they would do evil that good might come of it. But we know that such explanations are not true.

Some little time ago, in a Western American city, a woman was haled into court because she had held a little child's hand over the flame of a gas-stove in order to teach it not to play with

fire. The court sent her to prison, and her act was execrated in the press as being dastardly and inhuman. And yet the God of the Bishop of Birmingham's explanation is forever holding the hands of countless little children in the flame, and that not for a passing moment but for weary pain-racked hours and days, weeks and months, until they struggle free into the light or pass on into the valley of the shadow.

And it is the same with the older children, the men and women: all, according to this interpretation of the matter, must pass through the fire; all, once at least; countless millions, many times. And all the time they are being racked with fear and doubt, and oftentimes with great agony of mind; and friends are being parted, and friends are proving false; and hatred and ingratitude and all manner of wickedness are stalking through the land.

Such, if we are to see it this way, is the will of God; otherwise, He cannot express His will. Such are the means for perfecting the spirits of just men. And yet man, with sure instinct, is

fighting against it all, is execrating it and crying out to be delivered from the body of this death, this evil, this outrage on all that infinite vision within him which speaks of better things even than Abel.

And yet this very modus which even the humblest would have none of in his own life, is, under the terms of the Bishop of Birmingham's explanation, attributed unhesitatingly to the God of all the earth, to the infinite All that is all there is. Is man better than his Maker? Shall not the God of all the earth do right?

Well, we simply cannot hold it for an instant. Mr. Sheppard is but expressing the feeling of our common humanity when he writes, "It is impossible not to face the force of the famous protest of John Stuart Mill: 'I will call no Being good, who is not what I mean by good when I apply the word to my fellow creatures.'"' If such a God as above shadowed forth were possible, then no man that was worth his salt but would defy him to his face.

But there is no such God.

Evil is not God's method for making perfect the spirits of just men. It is not the will of God that any man should die or suffer, or be in fear or want. For in the infinite wholeness—the All-in All as Paul puts it—that is God, there are and can be none of these things. "Perfect love casteth out fear. . . . He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

And what is love? It is surely the embodiment of that perfection which is God and His man, its apprehension and reflection. Or, to put it more simply, it is the recognition that God is infinite Good, infinite Principle, the same yesterday, today, and forever, that man is his image and likeness, and that evil with all its hosts is what Jesus said it was, a lie, a liar, and the father of it, or, as St. John described it, "that which seemeth to be but is not."

The origin of evil! It can have no origin, for if it had an origin it would be an abiding entity, whereas it has no more real existence in the understanding of life than twice two is five has in the understanding of numbers.

And yet it seemeth to be.

Well, so does twice two is five and all the other countless millions of mistakes which daily go to make up the travail of study. But these mistakes never affect the abiding facts. A thousand clerks may give you a thousand different reports as to the sum total of money you have in your treasure-chest, but the real total is forever the same, entirely unaffected by the lies that are being told about it.

So it is with man, the image and likeness of the One altogether lovely, and just as he begins to see this will the mistakes that are being made about him or that he is making about himself affect him less and less. The mathematician does not grow concerned as to the integrity of his problem or as to the ability of mathematics to solve it, simply because his progress toward solution is apparently beset by mistakes. His mistakes may spur him on to greater effort, but he never for a moment makes the supreme mistake of believing that there is any other way to perfection than to see that there are no mistakes

in mathematics, but that to every problem the *solution*—in other words the *fact—has existed from all eternity.*

So it is with mortal man, seeking to realize the birthright and status of man as the image and likeness of God. As he advances, daily striving to learn more about Truth and spurred on more and more by the love of it and less and less by the pain occasioned by departure from it, gradually he will come to the point where there are for him no mistakes, to the point to which Jesus attained at the end of his ministry, when he could say to his disciples, "Behold the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."

The conviction, however, that evil is in some way essential to the development of good is singularly tenacious. I have before me, as I write, a letter from a correspondent who takes the most vigorous exception to my views on the subject. In some curious way it is possible to trace in his attitude a strain even of indignation that any one should be so irreverent and disrespectful toward evil as to doubt the most important position

which it holds in our lives and *in the scheme of God*. He goes even so far as to insist that without "sin, sorrow, sickness, death . . . no Jesus of Nazareth would have achieved himself from Bethlehem to Calvary."

Quite apart from the only possible deduction from such a statement—namely, that an admittedly omnipotent, presumably all-wise, and supposedly all-loving God has devised, as a means of developing the "good" in his children, a disciplinary system so inhuman, so disreputably cruel as inevitably to prompt any decent man to take its author by the scruff of his neck and kick him into the middle of next week—quite apart from this deduction (and there is no other possible) there remains the fallacy of the necessity for evil that good may come. The man of Tarsus, as we have seen, had short shrift for those who held such doctrine. He said their "damnation is just."

This is indeed one of the world's most terrible burdens, this belief that in some inscrutable way evil is *necessary* to the development of good, and that without the prodding of evil, achieve-

ment must necessarily come to a standstill. Such a position is of course impossible.

When the mathematician has reached the point where he can be moderately certain that he will not make mistakes—in other words, has eliminated evil—has he thereby been deprived of all incentive to further effort? When I have learned to plant my garden so that my roses are not mildewed and my pansies clap their hands, can I no longer find pleasure therein? When my valleys stand so thick with corn that they laugh and sing, must I give up and say that there is nothing left for me to do? Is there no happiness, no upbuilding, no discipline in the unfoldment of good? Is there no pleasure in the bright and shining morning face unless it first be smudged and smeared? Is there no joy in the light of God's countenance unless it first be darkened?

But there is another point raised by this correspondent, which strikes deeper still: his insistence on the utter reality, or, as he puts it, "the sure-enough is-ness" of suffering. He takes as his final, his most conclusive argument what has come

to be known as Jesus's agony in the garden of Gethsemane. Well, let us look for a moment at the agony in the garden.

Was it caused by the fear of death?

Can any one believe that the Man who could heal the sick and raise the dead with a word, who could command the waves and they obeyed him, who within a short hour or less was to restore Malchus's ear, and within a few days raise himself from the dead, was really afraid of the so-called physical suffering of the cross and had not reached a point where they meant nothing to him and could not touch him? Had the Man who, a little earlier in the evening, had declared that the prince of this world had nothing in him, had this Man not graduated beyond the point where he had to fear physical suffering? In the garden of Gethsemane was this really the burden he was carrying or is it not true that in maintaining such a position we are merely "grovelling in the pigmy view," seeing as the whole tragedy, as we call it, what was in reality but "a speck of dust thrown in the face of spiritual immensity"?

Let us look at it more closely:

On that evening in the month Nisan, what was the position? Jesus had declared quite plainly to his disciples that he had power to lay down his life and had power to take it again. On a previous occasion, when the multitude sought to stone him, he, recognizing that his time had not yet come,—in other words, that his work was not yet finished,—simply passed through the midst of them and disappeared. But now he had come to see that he would have to go on; that he had demonstrated the nothingness of every phase of mortality save one, and that any longer delay would simply be an attempt to substitute his growth for that of his disciples. Unless he departed from them the Comforter could not come unto them. He could not do their work for them. In some way or other, each one of them had to work out his own salvation for himself, had to see the truth for himself, had to claim his own heritage.

The question whether they could do it or not was a tremendous question, but there was another with which he was confronted, infinitely greater

still. The salvation of the whole world, the success or failure of his mission depended upon these few dull, ignorant men, who but a few days before had been quarreling among themselves as to which of them should be the greatest. Could they stand? Had they caught the faintest glimmer of the real meaning of his life and work?

All the evidence was to the contrary. But a little while before, one of them, accused of contemplating treachery, had been so far from denying it that he went out at once to do his work. True, all the others had protested that even if they had to die with him, they would never deny him. But he knew differently. He knew that they would all forsake him; he knew that Peter, upon whose understanding he had built such high hopes, would deny him. Were they really ready? Was he really justified in *going on?* Or should he wait and teach them some more? What should he do?

Is it any wonder that as he went up from the brook Kidron, toward the garden, he was plunged in doubt? When they reached the shade of the olives, he made one last appeal to them,

applied one last test. He asked them to watch with him while he went forward a little space to pray. When he returned he found them asleep. Could any further proof be needed? Was it possible that these men who could not watch with him even for one hour were fit to carry on his work? What was he to do? There was nothing written down, no script, no roll of teaching, only this little group of men whose eyes were heavy with sleep. What was he to do? He went away again to pray and on his return found them asleep once more, "for their eyes were heavy."

And so we are told that he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time saying the same words, and that was the end of it. He had been "sorrowful and very heavy" before, but this time he won through, and he saw that heaven and earth could pass away but his word could never pass away, and that even if his disciples should hold their peace the very stones would cry out. In other words, he saw that he had shattered the belief in materialism *for time and eternity*, and that once he had carried his work through to com-

pletion in the overcoming of the last enemy, from that moment the belief in a power apart from God would be fighting a losing battle. And so they could sleep on and take their rest, for the Kingdom was come, and the church was founded, and the gates of hell could not prevail against it.

Only once afterward did this doubt try to come back, when dull minds and fearful hearts heard the strange cry, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*" But even in this is it too outrageous because too inevitable to hear not a note of agonized appeal but, on the contrary, a note of triumph transcending any pæan song that has ever been heard in earth or in heaven, putting to rout with scorn the last whisperings of materialism? "*My* God, *My* God! Why hast *thou* forsaken me?" No, through all eternity, no, for "I and my Father are one." It was in his next breath that he said, "It is finished."

And now let us consider just one more aspect of the question as raised by this correspondent of mine, who is really typical of many. He writes, "To maintain the thesis of your argument you

must either deny the sure-enough is-ness of the wounded, diseased, suffering brute, or else affirm that man's two-plus-two-is-five thinking is responsible for every pain and pang of every living creature from the dawn of creation to this moment's fall of a sparrow."

Well, that is exactly what I do deny and affirm. I do deny the sure-enough is-ness, the *reality*—from the point of view of Principle, God, infinite Good, and of man in His image and likeness—the reality of *everything* unlike God. I do affirm that mortal man's two-plus-two-is-five thinking is responsible for every pang of every living creature, from the dawn of creation to this moment's fall of a sparrow, and for his own pangs as well. And I hereby invite my correspondent and all others who agree with him to reverse their methods, to stop picturing their God as either impotent or criminally responsible for a system abhorrent to common humanity, and to catch some glimpse of the "unreal shadow" of *all* materiality, as it must have appeared to the mind of Christ Jesus when he declared: "If ye have faith as a grain of

mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove." Or when he described the devil, evil, everything unlike good, as *a lie, a liar, and the father of all lies.*

The real honest-to-goodness plain man will find no difficulty here. As Mr. Sheppard so well puts it, "It is these people who can recapture the soul of the Gospel and bring back to the Churches the lost radiance of the Christian path." Jesus stated his case exactly when he said: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Or as Paul, with his inexorable incisiveness, put it to the Corinthians:

> We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks *foolishness;*
>
> But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the *wisdom* of God.

Chapter VI

FROM TENNESSEE TO ROME—AND BEYOND

HOW CAN ANY THOUGHTFUL STUDENT
OF THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF CHRIST
HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT MANY MATTERS
NOW LOOKED UPON BY THE CHURCHES AS
BEING OF VAST IMPORTANCE CAN BE RELATED TO
THE HOPES OF THE FOUNDER OF CHRISTIANITY?

—*The Impatience of a Parson.*

IN his open letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, published recently in "The Times," the Bishop of Birmingham made a statement which, within a few hours of its appearance, was cabled round the world. I read it out here in California the same day it appeared in London. "No man," said Dr. Barnes, "shall drive me to Tennessee or to Rome."

At first the phrase captured my fancy. There was about it apparently a fine bid for freedom, a positive stand for that right of free thought without which reformation and progress are alike impossible. But, later on, as the first eager

approval, which any restatement of liberty must command, faded away, there was left behind an old, familiar, rather dreary sense of nothing really accomplished and nothing really done.

As I stood and scanned the road between Tennessee and Rome there seemed to be so little at any point to commend it. The Bishop of Birmingham is well out in the open. With a courage greater than many of his fellows, he has, instead of turning into some ready-made house, explored about among the ruins which strew the roadside, and has got together enough to build him a new house. The fashion of it is old, as old as any between the two points, but it has many modern improvements not to be found in Tennessee or in Rome. It is, however, set foursquare on the highway, and in the general style of its architecture it conforms to the demands of the highway commissioners.

Now, for fifteen hundred years and more a great multitude has been passing back and forth along this highway, searching, although they knew it not, for some one to lead them away from it.

Some few have traveled in comparative comfort, but for the vast majority the toil of it has been greater than the joy of it; while for an incredible number the journey has been made with bleeding feet. But the highway is always the same.

The various commissioners, all the way from Tennessee, make it a special point of duty to maintain their section of the highway as it was in the days of their fathers. Some "advanced" commissioners do indeed, every now and again, declare stoutly that their section is getting better. But for the most part, as the French travelers put it, "the more it changes the more it is the same thing."

It was a sense of things such as this that suddenly gripped me when I came to myself after reading the full text of Dr. Barnes's letter. In that year of grace 1927, with nearly nineteen hundred years of Christ's teachings behind us, a clearly sincere exponent of this teaching feels himself called upon to re-argue such issues as these.

If the man Christ Jesus could feel himself jus-

tified in saying to the disciples, who, after a few short years of teaching, had so far failed to understand his doctrine as to be unable to heal a demoniac boy, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" what *would* he have said to this?

Do we not need to stop right here—the Bishop of Birmingham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, all of us—and ask ourselves the question: If all this should really be important to our God, what manner of God, in God's name, do we think we are worshiping? What *can* we think of the *mentality* of a God by whom such things are considered important? Is it not time that we broke free from these trammels of tradition, and in a simple appeal to our own consciousness, which can only be a reflection of the consciousness of our God,—for there can be no other,—ask ourselves not what "religion," the understanding of God, is according to the tradition of the elders but what it *must* be according to the forever fact of Truth, of THAT WHICH IS, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

If our concept of religion, of Christianity, of Truth, call it what you will, is worth anything, it will take no hurt from being faithfully called into question, even in its seemingly most fundamental aspects. Whatever is of God will stand and withstand, as surely and inevitably as twice two is four will stand and withstand any assault that can be made upon it. There is little hope and little chance of progress until we rid ourselves of the assumption that it is part of our duty, as religionists, to hold out a helping hand to the Almighty. The Almighty is just as able to take care of himself as the multiplication table, and for just the same reason.

"Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?" and "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."

These two texts, it has seemed to me, throw open the gates. Whatever outrages *our* sense of right, of justice, of dignity, of greatness and great-mindedness, of honesty and compassion, of

all the things of Spirit which Paul sets forth so fully in his epistle to the Galatians, we have clearly no right to attribute for a moment to our God. If we, with power of choice so seemingly limited, would not, for any reason we can possibly conceive, blight the life of a fellow-being, crush out in agony the life of a little child, "for a good purpose," then clearly our God would not. If we, with our vision of what is and what is not of real importance so dim and uncertain, are, as we are, steadily seeing the absurdity of form and ceremony as an actual means to spiritual growth, then our God must have seen it long ago.

If *we* recognize the fact that to clothe ourselves in certain vestments, move toward the class room in certain formation, observe certain ceremonies in entering and seating ourselves, in opening our books and sharpening our pencils, will never aid or hinder us one jot in the study of the science of mathematics or any other science, then we ought not to attribute blindness on this subject to our God.

Omnipotent God, Mind, Life, Truth, Love,

health, holiness, harmony, peace, joy, infinite wisdom, the only real presence, seriously gaging John Smith's goodness and worthiness, his likeness to Himself, by the nature of his views "in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days"!

Neither is this to disparage John Smith. But the John Smith as God sees him and the John Smith as the unenlightened human mind sees him, are two different things. The John Smith as the human mind sees him is a little two-legged animal. From the top of one of his own sky-scrapers he looks like a fly; from the distance of a few thousand feet up in the air he does not exist at all. Shorn of all his trappings, he is concerned with very little things. Although from thirty thousand feet up in the air no one can see what he is doing, *he* is intensely occupied. What he shall wear, whom he shall talk to, what he shall eat, how he may be honored, where he shall sleep, what banquets he shall attend, what multitudes he shall preach to—these are great concerns with him. From thirty thousand feet up in the air there

is nothing left of him; there is nothing but the earth and sea and sky. Nevertheless he is very busy, and it is a matter of tremendous moment to him whether he crosses himself from right to left or left to right, whether he lights a candle or does not light it.

But the John Smith of Spirit's creating is something very different. He is the son of God, and all that the Father hath is his. His Father is Spirit, therefore he must be like Spirit; his Father is infinite, therefore his knowledge of the Father—which is "life eternal"—must be an infinite unfoldment. Into this unfoldment which was before Abraham, nothing can enter that defileth or maketh a lie; therefore nothing of the flesh can enter, the flesh, of which the great demonstrator of life declared it "profiteth nothing."

To this man, as he comes more and more to himself, the so-called material life, with all its sin, sorrow, sickness, disease, and death, all its mistakes, its twice-two-is-fives, becomes more and more "as a dream when one awaketh." His thought is occupied less and less with the *shadow*

of matter, more and more with the *substance* of Spirit, until he awakes in God's likeness and is satisfied, seeing the whole of material existence as Jesus saw it, merely as the human script in which mortals are misinterpreting to themselves the unsullied goodness of life in a thousand different ways, mostly grotesque and misleading.

He will see that his mirrors are often concave and often convex, that the glass through which he is looking is often colored and always dark, that he sees the eternal activity of Mind now as a good Samaritan and now as a band of thieves, now as the growth of a flower and now as the growth of an inhuman conspiracy or a loathsome disease. But as he sees more and more face to face he will see that the thieves, the murderers, the conspirators, the loathsome disease are but the distortions of the dark glass and never had any place in time or eternity.

And as he climbs up toward this Horeb height where all is revealed, he will one day look back, and, as a man who can no longer see the things he thought so big when in the valley, he will wonder

how he ever could have associated this infinity of goodness and greatness and glory which he now recognizes as man, with eating and drinking, fasting or feasting, new moons and sabbaths, and all the rest of the *great illusion* which Jesus characterized with such inexorable incisiveness as *a lie, a liar, and the father of it.*

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." And there was no more Tennessee and no more Rome, neither was there found any more highway that had lain between them.

The whole of our effort must be concentrated on securing some real glimpse, here and now, of this new heaven and new earth. Somehow or other, at some time or other, Spirit must become *substance* to us. Somehow or other, at some time or other, what seems to us now a jumble of fancy must gradually take form and substance, and be hailed by us as the *reality*. Somehow or other, at some time or other, the statement of Paul must be made good that we shall not all sleep but that we shall all be *changed* "in a moment, in the twin-

kling of an eye, at the last trump," at the moment, surely, when the veil of material consciousness, "the middle wall of partition," worn so thin as to be no longer a barrier, is suddenly broken down and man finds himself not in the wilderness, not farther and farther away from rest than ever before, but suddenly *at home.*

"What the individual and the Church both need is *a new reality.*"

If we agree with Mr. Sheppard, and we must surely agree with him, then let us face the matter like men and women of common sense. What kind of road must be the road to a new *reality?* Will it be a path of flowers? Will it be a veritable Siegfried's journey down the Rhine to a land of promise? Will it be entirely undisturbing and undisturbed? Will the break-up of material beliefs, our most cherished convictions, our sure-enough is-ness be a calm, voluntary floating away on the wings of sense?

Or will it, on the contrary, be a time of strife and turmoil and doubt such as the world has never witnessed before; with nothing any more that can

be taken for granted; with nothing that can go unquestioned; with new views ruthlessly profaning what we have long regarded as the holy of holies of life; with youth in an uproar, the home invaded and scattered, the marriage covenant sore pressed on all sides, all our sanctities thrown down at our doorstep with a laugh and the hurrying on of heedless feet?

For centuries the voice of the fanatic, looking only through material eyes, blind to everything that does not come to him in the guise of matter, has made the prophetic words of our Master when he strove to open our eyes to the dawn of this new reality, to assail our ears as a sounding brass:

> Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;
>
> Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

For centuries the little men have run up and down the earth with fire on their heads, crying out like Solomon Eagle that the time was coming, that the time was coming; feverishly painting lurid

pictures in which a material world goes up in smoke and flames and a material Jesus Christ comes riding down to the rescue on the clouds of heaven.

Can anything be done with such a consciousness? Can anything be done with the mind that cannot see, cannot even catch a glimpse of the fact that the struggle *is wholly in the realm of mind?* that our weapons are not carnal but spiritual, but none the less mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ?

It is just this terrible period of transition through which, as it seems to me, the world is passing to-day. We are literally in the last days. Not the last days so dear to the hearts of our Solomon Eagles, but in those far more terrible but none the less glorious last days when consciousness is at last *fretting itself free from the bonds of matter;* when perplexity is everywhere; when the cry of the human mind as it dashes itself upon the rocks is like the waves of the sea; when

men's hearts are failing them, wondering what is coming next; when we find to our agony and fear that the foundations of our concept of life are being shaken.

It is just at this time that those who understand will look up and see the Son of man, the *New Reality*, coming; at first dimly in a cloud, maybe, but anon with power and great glory. And they will lift up their heads because they know that their redemption draweth nigh.

We *must* take it all out of the realm of matter, and put it where it belongs, and has always belonged, in the realm of mind. We must be born again. We must accept Spirit, God as *substance*, and see God's unlikeness, matter, of which Jesus said "it profiteth nothing," as shadow. We must strive for a change in consciousness, for a new reality, for a clearer view of what William James was surely feeling after when he spoke of the whole universe of material things, "the furniture and choir of heaven" as "*a mere surface veil of phenomena, hiding and keeping back the world of genuine realities.*"

In the chapters which follow I will strive to show how, as I see it, this break-up of material beliefs is the cause and explanation of so much about which our hearts are failing us; and how, struggling and striving as we must struggle and strive *if the time is to be shortened*, we have nevertheless Jesus's word for it that we should *look up*, for our redemption draweth near. The word *transition* is written large across what follows.

In these chapters the "argument" to which the reader may have become accustomed has been largely left behind, and effort directed toward a more matter-of-fact—possibly less "impatient"—consideration of some of the great problems with which the present day is confronted, bringing to bear upon them such light as seems to me to flow from the unedited gospel of Jesus Christ as here envisaged, overturning, overturning, overturning until he cometh whose right it is.

In these chapters the reader enters upon a land the topography of which is largely different from that which he has been traversing. But "the stream

of true being" still runs through the midst of it, and will be found—as I hope, under God—in the closing chapters, spreading itself abroad once more, and giving promise of one day covering the old "earth" with the new glory as the waters cover the sea.

Chapter VII

THE CRADLE OF REVOLT

ARE WE LIVING IN
THE HECTIC LAST PHASE
OF A DYING ORDER OR MAY WE
CLING TO THE HOPE THAT IT IS THE
DARKNESS WHICH PRECEDES THE DAWN?
—*The Impatience of a Parson.*

ONE lovely afternoon in June, some fifteen years ago, I was passing under the Admiralty Arch in London, out of the bustle and roar of Charing Cross, into the comparative quiet of the Mall and St. James Park. It was a warm day, very warm for London, and the sunlight seemed to dance on the leaves of the plane-trees, and catch up a soft mist from the earth.

I was walking along and enjoying it all with that quiet satisfaction a Londoner feels when his London is running true to form, when suddenly, looking up, I saw a woman turning out of one of the little side roads leading to Birdcage Walk and coming toward me. She was obviously a

woman of grace and refinement, beautifully gowned in the mode of the day, save for the outrageous fact—for so it seemed to me—that the sleeves of her dress were completely transparent from the wrists to the shoulders.

Well, it was a shock, but I pulled myself together and was walking on without, I hope, any undue exhibition of emotion, when I noticed to my regret that several of the passers-by were not acting with a like restraint. First one here and one there quite frankly stopped to look after her. Then they began to follow her. Then a small crowd, and before she had gone fifty yards some fifty people must have been following her.

I shall never forget the look of bewildered terror which came over the girl's face when she realized that she was the center and cause of it all. She quickened her pace, but so did the crowd; then some small boys began to jeer, some youths began to jostle her, and it was easy to see what would happen. Before I knew what I was doing I had pushed my way through the crowd, enlisted the services of the inevitable policeman stationed

at the corner of Spring Gardens, and between us we got the half fainting girl into a taxi.

The rôle of knight errant was new to me, but I carried it through with an efficiency which surprised myself, and by the time I had deposited her at Queen Anne's Mansions, where she was staying with her father and mother, she had tearfully explained to me that they had just arrived from New York, that every woman in New York was wearing that kind of dress, that she never could have dreamed that such a thing would happen, and that she would never get over it.

I could not help recalling this incident very forcibly, some two or three years ago, when on a very similar summer day in June, I found myself once again passing under Admiralty Arch out of the whirl of the motor-buses into the blessed greenery of St. James Park. Everywhere one looked, dotted about the lawns, under the shade trees, walking along the Mall, leaning over the bridges across the Long Water, and feeding the ducks, were girls, not in gowns with transparent sleeves, but in gowns with no sleeves at all; in

gowns that did not come more than an inch or so below the knee; in gowns devoid of necks and only very transparently supplied with backs.

Well, I remember I hired a chair from an ancient but watchful attendant at the price of twopence, and, taking it under a tree, sat down and watched it all. Twelve years before one lone girl, clad after a fashion which at this moment would be regarded as almost Quakerish in its modesty, had created something bordering on a riot in this very place; women had openly dubbed her a hussy; men and boys, excited by the brazenness of her costume, had openly followed her, with intentions which were not honorable, and more undemonstrative passers-by had wondered what the world was coming to.

And this was what the world was coming to—bare arms, bare knees, bare necks, and, yes, bare backs too. What *was* it coming to? And yet, as I looked out from my Olympian seat under the tree, I could not but note how unconcerned everybody seemed about it. It may have been fancy, but it seemed to me that the air was purer and

cleaner than it had been twelve years before, as if an unholy pressure had been relieved, and impudent hocus-pocus shorn of its imaginary power. Legs were everywhere, arms were everywhere, necks and backs by the round dozen and score were everywhere, and yet the men and boys passing back and forth were going about their daily walk and conversation just as if nothing were happening, just as if the world around them was not coming to anything out of the ordinary, after all.

And so, as I sat under my tree I thought of many things, and I remember recalling how, several years before, a great artist had told me an interesting story. We were talking about this very matter of women's dress, and how entirely it was a question of the point of view. He remembered, he said, that one day when he was a young art student a curious thing happened at the life class he was in the habit of attending. The model was a young girl of singular refinement and beauty of form, and the class was drawing her undraped figure. She was a good model, and had

been sitting motionless for half an hour or so, when, suddenly glancing upward, she saw the face of a man peering at her through the skylight. She had been posing for half an hour before a class of fifty men, yet when she saw this face at the skylight, with an outraged cry she threw a wrapper around her shoulders, jumped from the platform, and withdrew in tears to her dressing-room.

Now, the artist has always been regarded as necessarily a man of looser morals than the man who follows some other calling. It is an absurd assumption, of course, but it arises from the fact that the average human being, dragooned into a show of "respect" for the "mysteries" of women's dress cannot conceive of any one as anything but immoral who does not give the rap of a button for it.

The fact is, of course, that artists are not less moral than other men, but have, on the contrary, gained a certain measure of freedom from that incubus of mystery which makes for, as it is intended to make for, the excitation of desire. The human mind resents the acquisition of this

freedom. Whatever this so-called life force is, which, Bernard Shaw says somewhere, takes us by the scruff of our necks and compels us to create after its kind, it will fight every step of the way against any movement tending to shake off the shackles of mere animalism and make for a larger and higher interpretation of life.

A hundred years ago the "womanly woman" had perhaps reached her most "womanly" expression. The women of Jane Austen's day were almost completely preoccupied with questions of sex. They had it for their every thought. They sewed a little, cooked a little, read French a little, played the harpsichord a little, languished a great deal, had the vapors whenever necessary, and, as a last resort, went into a decline. But whether they sewed or played or had vapors, it was always with some very gallant gentleman or gentlemen in view. And as to the very gallant gentlemen, they were so gallant that a chance view of my lady's ankle was sufficient to put them into a cold sweat, while anything more was sufficient to persuade them that they had been

transported out of the world of everyday life into the half-world of everyday life, which existed a hundred years ago just as it does to-day, and just as it has done since the beginning of time.

I remember that as I sat on that twopenny chair under the shade trees in St. James Park, asking myself if after all it was a degenerate age in which I was living, a boy and girl passed by, taking a short cut across the grass toward the water. He was a healthy-looking youngster, with a sunburnt laughing face and curly hair, and she, free and lissome, kept pace with him. In dress she was everything she ought not to have been, according to the standards of a dozen years before. According to the standards of Jane Austen she was nothing but a wanton.

As I watched them they suddenly went up in smoke, and in their places I saw my lady and her gallant gentleman of a hundred years ago. They seemed to have only one thing in common, one thing to talk about, one reason for existing. And he bowed over her little hand and she blushed underneath her ringlets and the great preoccupa-

tion of all the ages was enthroned with power. Next moment they had gone their way, and the boy and girl of this present hour of grace were back again. They had stopped in front of me, and he was kneeling on the ground and supporting her foot on his knee, tying her shoestring, and they were both laughing. "Well," she said as she steadied herself with her racket, "it was a pretty even fight, but I won, fair and square, didn't I?"

It was a pretty even fight. The words came to me with a strange new revealing. I remembered too, some fifteen years previous, in the days just before the war, I had sat with one of the leaders of woman's suffrage, and debated with her the whole question of the "liberation movement," as we called it then. The suffragists were burning churches throughout the country, in those days, blowing up bridges and doing all manner of things they ought not to do, and the cry of sex warfare was to be heard on all sides. Yet this mild-voiced, mild-mannered woman insisted to me that the one aim and purpose of it all, how-

ever little men and women seemed to be conscious of it, was equality and coöperation. "We must have equality and we must have coöperation, because only thus can we obtain completeness, and that is, after all, what we are all seeking, and must one day attain."

And so, as I sat there under my tree, and the sun began to sink down behind Constitution Hill, and the ancient but watchful attendant began to pile up his vacated chairs, I seemed to get a new light. In spite of the fulminations of so much constituted authority, I began to see this younger generation as "some holy thing."

It is a conviction that has grown in strength ever since. Every woman is a potential man, and every man is a potential woman. The woman of to-day may not have envisaged this as something to be demonstrated; she is, nevertheless, setting about its demonstration. With unerring, if unconscious wisdom, she is doing the first things first, she is getting rid of the mystery of the flesh. It may appear to her very often as an exaggerated form of sex indulgence. The arbiters of fashion

may think that like a homeopathic dose every attenuation adds to its potency, yet the man who twenty years ago was fired by the suggestion and mystery of the clothed form finds himself unmoved in the presence of so much nakedness, because it is unashamed.

The point is a fundamental one. Some summers ago I was in Paris. I had not been there since the war, but in the days before the war I had known Paris well. From a little front room in the Rue Descartes, in the Quartier Latin, I had seen the world go by, and fared forth at all times of the day and night to mingle with it. Every phase of Paris life fascinated me, and so when I came back to it this time I sought to mingle with it again. Change, of course, had been everywhere, but that is away from the point; what is to the point is just one experience—a visit I paid one hot August evening to the Casino de Paris.

The great theater was filled to overflowing—with Americans. Fathers and mothers from—to judge from the conversation around me—every State in the Union were there with their families:

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college students, boys and girls, schoolmarms and maiden aunts, a very respectable and utterly wholesome crowd. They were out in search of adventure; they thrilled with the thought of being real devilish. Often had they heard and read of the terrible things that were to be seen at such shows, and here they were actually going to see them. Some of them looked as if they wished they had never come. Momma was obviously disturbed; Poppa obviously determined to see the thing through; Son tingling with expectation; Daughter triumphant.

Directly behind me was a family party from Vermont, and I shall never forget the despairing gasp which came from the mother of the party and a maiden aunt when the curtain rose on the first scene. It was a masterpiece of color and light, but as each successive girl mounted the dais, and, throwing aside a gorgeous wrap, posed unclothed from the waist up, these two sterling women could see nothing in it but an outrage on decency.

Now, I am not concerned to defend such

shows; I really dislike them, not so much because of the shows themselves as because of the audience. I am concerned with their effect upon the audience. The first hour at the Casino de Paris was atrocious. The audience was an indecent audience; but gradually a change was noticeable. The horrified gasps, the semi-hysterical giggling, the "Land's sakes!" the "Good nights!" died away. The mother from Vermont became silent, and I had almost forgotten about her when the curtain went up on a scene which was supposed to be the climax. It represented the interior of a Roman bath.

Whatever may be thought of such exhibitions, there can be no doubt that it was a perfect picture, a Leighton, a Collier, or an Alma Tadema. The lighting, the setting, the faithfulness to detail, the draped or half-draped figures of the women, their pose and movement were all characterized by a very excellent restraint. Suddenly at the top of the marble steps leading down to the bath a young girl appeared; she paused for a moment, and then, throwing aside her wrap,

descended the steps, unclothed, to the water's edge.

And then I became conscious that Momma was speaking.

"My! isn't she just beautiful!" she said happily.

"She sure is," was Poppa's reply.

I looked round at Daughter; she was looking straight in front of her, and for some unaccountable reason her eyes were filled with tears. Then I glanced at Son; he was holding sister's hand. I could not help asking myself then as I have often asked myself since—had these people risen or fallen in the scale of morality since they entered the theater? They had surely risen. They had gone to look for darkness with a candle, and behold there was no darkness.

The incident to me is typical of this day and age. The lack of morality is not in the nakedness but in the shame, and the shame grows less day by day. The question of sex is really occupying thought far less to-day than at any time in history. Where a hundred years ago a woman had

but one preoccupation, to-day she has a hundred. And so when a Prince of the Church declares, as he did recently, that he is shocked at "the unparalleled depravity of woman's dress," and declares that he is "at a loss to explain the universal decadence which has swept over the world," the woman of to-day is likely to answer him shortly enough.

Some time ago I was in a street car in a far Western city. Two young girls came in, and took a seat diagonally across from me. They were evidently returning from some afternoon concert, and were animatedly discussing the program. Almost opposite them sat what can only be described as a simpering youth. As one of the girls crossed her legs, and displayed a pair of sturdy bare knees, the youth simpered still more. He tried to attract her attention, and finally did, but the next moment, collapsed. The expression of contempt on the girl's face was most successful and the most potent I have ever seen.

That expression of contempt is on the face of woman to-day whenever she is faced with the

prurience of man, and man is rising to the demand that woman is making upon him. The struggle is ever toward completeness. For the most part, it is a blind struggle, the instinct of the leaf that turns toward the light, but just in proportion as it becomes more conscious, does its success become more rapid. For untold centuries men and women have been seeking this completeness materially, but the more surely do they through such means scale the heights, the more certainly are they hurled from them into the depths. "Who told thee that thou wast naked?" is still the demand of Reality from those who, through the ecstasy of the senses, have sought to achieve the heaven of completeness.

No transitional period is desirable for its own sake, and as far as the relation of the sexes and all other fundamental relations are concerned, we are passing through a period of transition, a period in which license is, more often than not, mistaken for liberty, and old-time "faiths" vanish in a peal of laughter. Yes, it *is* the hectic last phase of a dying order, truly enough, but it is

also, in very deed, the darkness which precedes the dawn. The laughter is the most wholesome thing about it. The surest way for the world to rid itself of the hocus-pocus of sex—as of so much else that is hocus-pocus—is to laugh at it.

> A lady with a lamp shall stand
> In the great history of the land.

Well, the lady has come, and she is standing. And her skirts are short, and her arms are bare. As to her back, I cannot see it, for her face is toward me; but on her face, upturned to the light of her lamp, is shining the glory of a new era.

Chapter VIII

THE QUESTION OF MARRIAGE

WE MUST CEASE TO
THINK THAT THE FIRES OF
GROWTH ARE THE PANGS OF DEATH.
—*The Impatience of a Parson.*

SAID a great writer, some fifty years ago, "Marriage, once such a settled fact among us, is losing its sure foundation." Fifty years ago such a statement was like the voice of one crying in the wilderness; to-day it is the commonplace of the street corners.

What are we going to do about it?

It is evident enough what we *are* doing about it—at any rate, the vast majority of us. We are lifting up our voices and weeping over it. We are deploring the decadence of our day; we are eulogizing the high principles of our fathers, and sitting on the housetops looking for the advent of some great revivalist. As it was in the beginning,

is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The human mind is fearful of nothing so much as change. It does not object to variety, but real fundamental change can be brought about only through much travail. The human mind will hail with all honor the man who invents a new flavor for rice-pudding, but the man who has the temerity to advocate the abolition of rice-pudding will be ridden out of town.

On no other one subject, it may be ventured, does the human mind more cordially hate to face facts than on the question of marriage, or more stubbornly refuse to envisage the possibility of radical change. The man who even so much as hints at such a suggestion is promptly written down, and written off,—by the vast majority of Christian people, at any rate,—as a moral outlaw and an enemy of religion.

No matter how much circumstances may proclaim to the contrary, marriage is still regarded as the "settled fact," and the terrible violence it suffers is always held to be the result of a de-

praved condition which must be redeemed, and never of a fuller and higher understanding of life which cannot be gainsaid. Human nature is ever seen as "going to the dogs," and never as ascending up into heaven. The world is forever looking *back* on its golden age. "When I was a boy" has been at once the pride and the reproach of each second generation since generations began.

"When I was a boy" marriages were real marriages, homes were real homes, children were real children, and parents were real parents. Divorce was a terrible, almost unthinkable, last resort; home was one grand fireside, one perfect elegy of comfort and joyful unquestioned duty; children were always obedient, parents always loving, or, if ever stern, then cruel only to be kind.

And then one day there set in the terrible change. A country doctor in the north of Ireland, in the cool of a summer evening, was watering his garden. From one strategic point to another he trailed his garden-hose, and, as he did so, he noticed how pliable it was, how resilient, how na-

turally it twined itself into rings and wheels. And then, suddenly, like a flash, it all came to him. Within a few days he had fitted a portion of the garden-hose to his child's mail-cart, and the first rubber tires were on the road.

I do not know whether that was the beginning of it all, but from that day it has never stopped. The bone-shaker was transformed overnight, and before the world knew where it was, every boy within hail of civilization was clamoring for a bicycle "with Dunlop tires," and every man too. Then small sisters in short skirts made contracts with small brothers to ride their machines, and elder sisters began to wish they were not so elder. And they wished and wished until at last they began to wonder why they should not ride anyway. So in due time there appeared the "ladies' machine," grudgingly and dubiously accepted; and then, without warning, came Mrs. Bloomer.

From one end of Christendom to the other she was reprobated. The small boy hooted at her; the plain man and woman, stricken to the depths of their orthodox souls, would have none of her.

But, while the fight raged, the great world at large—men and women, boys and girls—was mounting its wheel and riding away from home, gaining a wider sense of things, going to places it had never gone to before, enjoying experiences it had never dreamed of. From that day to this the world has never stopped riding away from home, away from the stated, the fixed, and the settled, into the realm where "all things are yours."

In the van of this great movement the woman and the girl have always held foremost place. "When I was a boy" the only profession open to a women was the nursing profession; to-day no profession, no activity of any kind is closed against her. And yet, though all the world is thus turned upside down, though accustomed standards all round us have changed past all recognition, though the sky-scrapers of the new earth are shouldering their way up to heaven, yet do we fearfully and tearfully seek to hold what we call the marriage covenant in the two-story brown-stone of our fathers and their fathers before them.

Can it really be done?

I wonder. The answer, it seems to me, depends very largely on our fundamental attitude toward life. If we are willing to accept the debit and credit view of life, the rewards and punishments so dear to the heart of Joseph Butler; if we feel bound to accept the views that righteousness inheres alone in faithful observance of a certain fixed code and that any departure from that code is sin, that this world is simply one long arbitrary obedience test, satisfaction of which will admit us to heaven, while failure to satisfy it will precipitate us into hell; if this is our view, then are we justified in rising in Jonathan Edwards wrath, and insisting that though the sky-scrapers of all other human activities and relationships push their heads above the clouds into heaven, the marriage relation be restrained within its brownstone walls on the earth.

If, on the other hand, we see life—as it seems to me it must surely be seen, as an infinite progression, out of the fantasies of a material consciousness, out of the absurd twice-two-is-five of everyday life, into the great twice-two-is-four of

being justly apprehended—if we thus see life, then must we see also that in this life there can be no mistakes, only experience. The advancing tide ebbs and flows, it swirls and eddies and throws itself hither and yon, but it steadily climbs the beach. We never doubt that it will ultimately reach its goal. Though the backwash skurries to meet the oncoming wave, and scatters it skyward in a thousand tufts of foam, though the eddy swirls around aimlessly and the waters meander drunkenly in all directions but the right one, we are never for a moment in doubt that every movement represents progress, and that the tide is on the way.

So, it has always seemed to me, must this thing we call life be regarded. And if this is so, then instead of viewing every change with distrust we must welcome it with favor. Instead of seeing in it merely men and women going to the dogs, we must see in it men and women mounting to heaven. If marriage, once such a settled fact among us, is losing its sure foundation, then instead of wailing and whimpering and scolding

over it, had we not better bestir ourselves to a new faith, wait with our loins girt for the inevitable emergence of the new firmament, willing, meanwhile, to leave the old landmarks and be glad to see them disappear? The greatest enemy of real progress is the man who insists on patching the past.

All through the ages, but more intensively than ever before during the past fifty years, the struggle of man has been toward individual liberty and individual completeness. He has sought it spiritually, and he has sought it materially, and every year that passes finds him more surely than ever before the man in possession. He speaks to the ends of the earth; he flies to the uttermost parts of the sea; he demands, and, in spite of all stiflement, demands again—and makes ever more good his claim—the right to think as he pleases. And in spite of all evidence to the contrary, he claims to be master of his own soul and to look for his happiness, not through a material but through a spiritual sense of things.

Do I hear a great roar of Homeric laughter?

Do I see a thousand incredulous fingers pointing to the jazz mania, the bob mania, the hose mania, the Oxford-bag mania of our wonderful day and age? Do I hear a thousand indignant voices raised in protest, their owners, kind souls, stricken to the heart at the stampede from the old ways, which they see all around them? Do I hear them denouncing every phase of "modern life," and winding up with a grand orgy of denunciation of the modern attack on the marriage covenant? Well, I cannot help it. I can only humbly repeat with the writer of Genesis, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

And it all is surely good, even the attack on the marriage covenant. The struggle of man is toward completeness. He begins to work out his problem as a child, in bonds, not only bonds imposed but bonds eagerly and tearfully sought. Inevitably, stage by stage, his story is the child's story. For the child not only submits, however grudgingly at times, to the bonds imposed by authority but he eagerly demands the bonds involved by his dependence. His happiness is not

complete or even remotely possible without the sense of protection of a grown-up presence, or without the love afforded him by some one his very own. But as he grows up, he learns to stand alone. His mother's or his father's word is no longer a law unto him; he is no longer gripped by a nameless fear when they are not close at hand. He is still a son, and may still hold a relationship to them which is truly great and grand, but it is an entirely different relationship.

All of which leads on to this: If the growing up of the child were so slow as to cover a period of thousands of years, and so be comparable to the growing up of the race, there would inevitably, sooner or later, develop a transition period when the fearful ones of that time would cry out, "The relationship of child and parent, once such a settled fact among us, is losing its sure foundation." And it would go on losing it. To their sense of things the situation would get worse and worse and more utterly outrageous. Every effort would be made to stem the tide. A thousand Mrs. Partingtons with new brooms would rush to the

rescue. Sermons would be preached on the subject, and books would be written. Bishops would issue pastorals, and popes would send out encyclicals, and all the time nothing would be happening but the unfolding of a higher sense of freedom and completeness, and the development of a new relationship far better than the old.

And so it is in this other matter. The world is growing up, that is all, and in the marriage relation is putting away childish things. In all directions woman is claiming her freedom, freedom to work, freedom to earn, freedom to come and go as she pleases. The fiction of dependence upon which rested the whole superstructure of "chivalry" is vanished away. Much as it may shock us, the bald fact remains that thousands and thousands, millions of women to-day could bring up a family without the aid of a husband at all.

It must be clear enough, then, that whatever the special union of the sexes which the world calls marriage may be, entirely different demands are made on it to-day than were being made fifty years ago. Is it any wonder that the certainty of

its foundation is becoming impaired? And should it be regarded as an outrage on morality to envisage the possibility of some radical change, in which a new and higher relationship would be given free course to develop itself in the new age?

We need not be afraid. The ladder set up from earth to heaven is a long one. Countless millions have not yet set their foot on the first rung. For more ages than we need take stock of, men and women will eagerly demand that they be bound together in all the old bonds. At the same time we should fairly and squarely face the fact that the years, as they pass, must see an ever growing army of men and women who are beginning to catch a glimpse of the inevitable, who are beginning to see that completeness does not consist in the physical union of man and woman but in the recognition and development, by the man, of the woman within him, and, by the woman, of the man which forever lies in the deeps of her own soul. And having so seen, men and women will claim the right to work side by side, free and inde-

pendent, instead of crowding back into the acorn where the twain are one *flesh*.

As this vision grows clearer, as the spiritual man with his limitless outlook is ever held less and less in the grasp of the material, the great fact will at last emerge that all the so-called human relationships are but the manifestation *to our present state of consciousness* of the one great cause, the one great Principle of which we are the effect.

Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother and who are my brethren?

And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

It was this same man whose last thoughts, as he hung nailed to a cross, were for his mother. We need never be afraid to face the new day.

And so the anxious and fearful may take heart of grace, while the courageous and far-seeing

should push fearlessly on. They will have need of much patience and much faith. The material man with his hatreds, his fears, his lusts, and his make-believe will fight to the last ditch against the onward movement of Spirit, and at no point in the field will the struggle be more severe than around this battered blockhouse of the old concept of marriage.

But the man who saw so many things clearly has penetrated far on into time, to a period long after the last thunderclap of this struggle shall have faded away into silence, and has left this record:

". . . When they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven."

Chapter IX

THE TONIC OF DISASTER

I WANT A DISTURBANCE.
—*The Impatience of a Parson.*

THERE is a question which for many years has often exercised my thoughts. Baldly and brazenly stated it would appear somewhat thus: Do we not really enjoy disasters in which we are not personally involved? Do they not give a zest to the day's work and an interest to intercourse? Is not the world, on the whole, better for them, less inclined to sloth, more alert, more expansive?

In trying to answer these questions I have not concerned myself with the rights or wrongs of the matter. They are too obvious. We ought to be sorry over an Osgosh flood—to take a purely mythical instance. It ought to cast a real gloom over our day; we ought not to enjoy telling our

friends about it. When we get down to the office in the morning, or meet an acquaintance on the train, we ought not to feel that inward thrill of having something of tremendous mutual interest to discuss; we ought not, as we go about our morning's work, to be conscious of having something to look forward to, and then discover that something to be the latest news from Osgosh; we ought not to be obliged to confess, as we must if we are truly honest, that the Osgosh flood has given a special point and interest to a day which otherwise would have been just like any other day, that throughout the day and evening it has afforded an absorbing subject of conversation, and that we shall go to bed at night with pleasurable anticipations of an interesting newspaper in the morning. All these things are obvious. They ought not to be. Yet they certainly are. What are we going to do about it?

The trouble is that in this particular instance, as in many others, nobody really faces the facts. His whole day has been brightened by the Osgosh flood. Mr. Sheppard's man in the street is unques-

tionably puzzled. It is absurd and outrageous. An old friend has just called him on the telephone. He had called him the day before, and before he got down to some humdrum business had asked pleasantly, "Anything new?" He had done the same thing two or three times a week for weeks, and each time the man in the street had answered dully, "No, nothing special." But this morning there was the Osgosh flood.

It would be the same next morning: full accounts of the rescue work . . . first-hand stories . . . thrilling tales of adventure . . . the inevitable hero . . . the man and the hour in a grand meeting . . . a general national rehabilitation in faith in the natural nobility of human nature. And then, later on, the pictures; and, later still, the movies; and so on and so on.

Moreover, all the time, to countless thousands of people has been afforded a great release; alertness and interest have spread themselves everywhere; ten million shoulders have been squared; ten million souls have experienced vicariously the fierce joy which must have suffused the heart of

the psalmist when he gritted his teeth and cried out exultantly that the waves of the sea were mighty and raged horribly, but that the Lord who dwelt on high was mightier.

Now, there is nothing exaggerated about this. It is true, of course, that to the people actually involved in the disaster—involved, that is, to the point of actual bodily injury either to themselves or to those dear to them, or to the point of serious irreparable loss of property—it does not appear in this light. But this is true of every form of pleasurable activity when prosecuted to excess. The man who walks ten miles with all the joy of the open road in his heart and all the fond illusion of a reducing avoirdupois in his daily-dozen soul, might walk the next ten with an increasing sense of hardship, and the next ten through the mists of impending disaster. The man who tackled his first plate of ham and eggs with feelings of peace and good-will to all the world, might look upon his second with a distinct disfavor, and upon his third with loathing. It is all a question of degree.

The amazing fact is true that the most terrible excess is necessary before the great spectacular disaster ceases to have its stimulating, and so a happifying, effect upon life. Any one who has been brought into intimate contact with disaster knows how true this is. Did any one ever see a picture of refugees camping out after some great fire or flood or earthquake where every last refugee was not smiling—grinning from ear to ear? And these are the real sufferers, the infinitesimal few. Out beyond them are the millions and millions of their fellow-men and women whose day —outrageous as it may seem to say so—has been given point and zest by their plight.

The other day I was reading an account of the San Francisco earthquake and fire and came across this passage. It is worth quoting in full:

> Every city and town and hamlet in the land gave unstintingly. As the destruction of San Francisco surpassed comparison, so the relief, springing spontaneously, almost without appeal, from every corner of the land, far exceeded anything of similar sort in history. Out of the common round of affairs sprang a magnanimous sympathy that impelled action—quick, almost impulsive in

its spontaneity. Before night Secretary Taft had started army tents and supplies on their way to San Francisco, and had expended a million dollars. Congress put aside its legislative work and hastened to make the necessary appropriation. Before it stopped, the expenditure of $2,500,000 had been authorized.

Commonwealths, municipalities, individuals—everyone—forgot the things customary, in a dominant wish to give. Organizations of every sort—churches, corporations, clubs, banks—pledged themselves for varying sums; many millions in the aggregate. The railroads carried all supplies free, and gave the right of way over all regular traffic to the relief trains. Passenger traffic service was off schedule for weeks. "Limiteds" took the sidings and forgot their record runs while thousands of freight cars rushed past on the main tracks.

Two hundred thousand people were homeless—unfed—without the means of sustaining life. A hundred miles of homes and business places had been destroyed. A city lay wasted and desolate—its hills swept bare—its people stricken beyond conception. The world had known nothing of sorrow so vast in all its history. The heart strings of the nation vibrated to it, and those rumbling wheels of many cars, low on their springs with the burden of mercy, sounded soft as notes celestial upon a land affrighted with the discordant tones of a great disaster.

The one false note in this description is the affrighted land. The land was not affrighted: it

was happy. It was up and doing, its thoughts had been suddenly turned into new and healthy channels. It was awake, alert and ready for anything. Imagine the joy of the nation's business world, on its way down to the sea of business in street cars, to be suddenly lifted "out of the common round of affairs," and no questions asked. Imagine the exhilaration with which Secretary Taft started his cargoes of army tents and supplies, and talked it all over with Mrs. Taft in the evening. Imagine the positive lust of relief with which Congress "put aside its legislative work"; and the joy of the commonwealths, the municipalities, and the individuals as they "forgot the things customary in a dominant wish to give."

What a time it was, to be sure! With what unholy glee did the long-suffering passenger agents order the Limiteds to the sidings, and with what interest, with what sheer relief from the boredom of the ordinary, did the passengers in the sidetracked Limiteds look out of the windows and watch the freight go by.

And all the time, in the "stricken" city, what

was the tone and the temper? There was suffering and misery enough, real anxiety of mind and wretchedness of body, but that was only among the few. The vast majority of San Franciscans got the "kick" of their life out of it, and to-day, in retrospect after twenty years, they are still getting kicks out of it.

It is a notorious fact that so great was the stimulus afforded by the earthquake and the fire, so widespread the interest, so complete the mental readjustment demanded and enforced, that the hospitals were emptied, that people who had been ailing for years forgot their ailments, and that for months the doctors had little or nothing to do.

Well, I have a feeling that at this point I shall be interrupted. I shall be reminded of the World War. I shall be asked if the war, the greatest of all calamities the world has ever known, really brought happiness to the vast majority of the human race. With no little diffidence and profound respect, I would answer "Yes"—and "No." The same argument holds good with regard to the great calamity of the war as in the

case of the comparatively small calamity of the Osgosh flood.

In the early days, in most countries, the vast majority of the people ate their first dish of ham and eggs amid wild songs of rejoicing and ringing of bells. Great numbers, a greater number than ever before, were forced to take a second and a third and even a fourth helping, until their souls loathed it, as did the souls of the Children of Israel, forced to continue eating the manna which in the days of its freshness they had called the bread from heaven. That is all.

But even to-day many millions of people look back upon the years of the war as a time wherein they found themselves, as a time wherein they could wake in the morning with the consciousness of having a man's or a woman's work to do, as a time wherein they forgot themselves and their littleness and found their real self and its greatness.

What is the explanation of it all? It seems to be true enough that if we call an end to hypocrisy and face the matter, we shall have to admit that

there is a tremendous tonic effect in disaster, in every kind of disaster, from a dog fight to a deluge; that we are cheered by it, and, to put the matter classically, thoroughly "pepped up" by it, surely as ever was Saul by the harp-playing David, and that in spite of the javelin he was forever hurling at him.

Why?

I wonder. This common man, who in his heart of hearts loves a dog fight, who is irresistibly drawn toward a crowd around a wrecked automobile, whose heart, no matter how much it may occasion him distress, does leap up at the sight or sound of "Extra!"—this common man who, with tears of perplexity in his common old eyes, has to confess that his day has been cheered by an Osgosh flood—what is he and what is he about? What is the meaning of this emotion, this age-old irresistible desire of which he is so ashamed that he never, unless he be a hardened sinner, even admits its presence?

Instinctively and inevitably I go back for answer to the remark once made by a distinguished

surgeon, "Men and women will do almost anything to escape the misery of being bored." *And what is boredom?* First and last and all the time it is *inaction.* And inaction is a condition dreaded, far above all conditions, by the human soul—and that in spite of itself—because it is the most impossible of all conditions. Every new discovery of science goes to prove more abundantly that the very essence of the universe is activity, that motion is everywhere, that, in the words of a great writer, "infinite *progression* is concrete being."

Activity is the law of Life, and activity is not good and evil, it is only and always wholly good. *It is our interpretation of it that is wrong.*

> I must have God. Life's too dull without,
> Too dull for aught but suicide.

And God is Life, and Life is activity, and wherever we see activity we see Life, whether it be in a dog fight or a dinner dance. In the presence of an Osgosh flood the soul of the common man, the soul of man released from the boredom of inactivity, goes out to meet the grand activity of Life.

He finds it not only in the swirling waters as they rush down the hillsides into the valley beneath but in the newsboys as they rush past him in the street with their extras damp from the press, and in the stir and the surge and the leaping to occasion he sees all around him.

It is a queer business, but it serves tremendously to illustrate a tremendous point. There will surely come a time when we shall interpret activity more truly, and, in proportion as we interpret it more truly we shall interpret it less painfully, but, however it be interpreted, the human soul forever feeling after God, or Life, "if haply it may find Him," will always demand and welcome activity. It may cry out in its agony, "The evil that I would not, that I do," as it pauses at the street corner to watch a dog fight, but it will pause and watch. For it must have God; it must have Life; it must have activity.

Oh, I know that a vast army of people are ready to protest, to insist that that common man at the street corner is only the victim of a sordid appeal to his primitive emotions. But I would

forestall the protest with the rejoinder that before this dream of emotions, primitive and otherwise, forever changing, was at all, that wherein there is no variableness neither shadow of turning, had existed from all eternity. "Twice two is four" is without beginning of years or end of days.

In its very essence this changeless Principle is necessarily activity, and the law of activity is a law of annihilation to everything unlike itself. In the presence of this activity, however marred its manifestation, the activity that is man, the infinite progression that is concrete being, knows and greets its own.

What the world is girding against in the churches to-day is the churches' inactivity, the intolerable doctrine inherent in the orthodox concept that the faith once for all delivered to the saints is a finite and not an infinite gift. It is of the very essence of our concept of Truth that it must either grow or be lost. It cannot be made to stand still. Yet, this is exactly what the churches have been trying to do with it for the last fifteen

hundred years and more. Birth, growth, maturity, decay, death, with Death, the enemy, enthroned forever, barring with brazen effrontery the way to Life, and then the same dreary round all over again. No change, no progress, no least sign of following the Way, no real overcoming of sin, sickness, or death, only a feeble patching effort, ultimating in inevitable acquiescence. No wonder the activity that is man, reflecting more and more the activity that is his Father, God, will have none of it, and cries out for *a new reality*.

And so the man at the street corner may be allowed to pass with the benediction and hope, while his brother in his office downtown, eagerly telling a friend about the Osgosh flood, may be equally held guiltless. Now they are seeing through a glass darkly, and they see the glory of activity in such strange images as a dog fight and a deluge, but the day will come when they will see face to face, when the beast will be revealed as a prince and a savior, and in the place of the tonic of disaster will be found the tonic of Life.

Chapter X

THE MAN WHO GAVE UP

WE DO NOT HESITATE
TO CONFESS THAT THE
TIMES ARE OUT OF JOINT AND
THAT THE WEAPONS WE FORGED FOR
OUR SAFETY ARE BROKEN IN OUR HANDS.
—*The Impatience of a Parson.*

A PILE of newspaper clippings taken from the daily press of the last few months lies before me. They relate to suicide. Almost at random I select one. It is dated San Francisco, and tells how the body of an unidentified man, a suicide, had been found under a tree on the grounds of Fort Funston, by a soldier of the fort.

The man [the account continues] was apparently sixty-five years old, five feet seven inches tall with gray hair and a gray mustache, short clipped. He wore a gray suit with red pin stripes. His cuff links were initialed "R." In his pockets were $1.17 and a note which read: "I am going deaf and blind. Enough said!" It was unsigned. In his right hand the man held a thirty-eight automatic with which he had killed himself.

Such a story is a commonplace of our modern life. It is a type, only one of a great array of other types, men, women, and children. The daily papers are full of such cases, and in our year-books we find them all assembled, a ghastly army, segregated into ages, sexes, and callings. Among them are not only poor but rich, not only low but high, for in this strange realm, the borders of which seem to spread out as civilization develops, there is no respect of persons. I copy this paragraph from one of our many almanacs:

> The victims of suicide include also a large number of people socially prominent, educated and wealthy. Among those during 1923, were 62 physicians, 48 lawyers and judges, 14 ministers, 32 college students, 64 bankers, 72 brokers, 43 actors, 26 editors, 32 club-men, 50 society women and over 100 wealthy men and women, some being ranked as millionaires, aside from 110 presidents and owners of large business concerns.

For the entire United States—to take the most notable specific instance—the average rate is about 17 per 100,000 or in a population of 105,000,000 about 18,000 a year.

America is admittedly the wealthiest, and is

all-hailed as the most privileged country in the world. Nowhere else is the necessity list so extended and the luxury list so curtailed; nowhere else, it might be supposed, should the joy of life be so firmly entrenched. Yet in Ireland, where poverty stalks everywhere, the suicide rate is 2.5 per 100,000 against America's 17. What is to be said about it?

Professor Masaryk, in his able book on suicide, attributes its steady growth to the decay of religion, and regards it as an insidious disease, noting with distress how its growth keeps pace steadily with the growth of civilization. There is much learned discussion of the matter everywhere. The empiricist sits up aloft, and watches the world go by; he observes various things about suicide, its seasonal character, the steadiness of its ratio, the preference of certain classes and certain peoples for certain methods, and, above all, its remorseless increase. He gets himself so stirred up that at last he can stand it no longer, and leaping from his seat, descends in a panic.

"Among the leaders of world civilization," he

exclaims, "here is the situation: the birth-rate is declining, crime is increasing, lawlessness bubbling over, and the suicide rate steadily mounting up with all the insidious silence of a rising tide."

Well, strangely enough, none of these things alarms me. Once again, it is the period of transition. In the days when the suicide was buried at the cross-roads with a stake through his body, when his property was confiscated, when he was deprived, by the authority of the church, of all hope of heaven, and convinced of an eternity of hell; in the days when, all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, mutual interdependence was much more pronounced than it is to-day, and the shame of failure much less in evidence; in the days when individual thinking was the exception, and mass thinking the rule, the would-be suicide had no doubt at all that if he yielded he would be jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire. He was browbeaten on the one side and comforted on the other. He did not attempt to think for himself, to face up to his own master, and to his own master stand or fall.

To-day all this is changed. A man, much more than ever before in history, has to decide for himself. All bars and bans are lifted, and thousands of individuals are standing like calves turned out of the stall for the first time, into the green pasture; they are dazed and bewildered. Others are running hither and yon. They pause in groups and exclaim to one another about it.

"Why, nothing is denied to us. All the old bars are down. Why should I do this because somebody says I should? Why should I refrain from doing that because somebody says that I should refrain?"

And some turn to crime, and some to all manner of indulgence, whether it be of sex or of license in some other form, and some in terror turn back to the bondage from which they have escaped, and plead that the mountains of tradition and custom should fall once more and cover them; and some, unable to return and unable to go forward, seek desperately the way of escape apparently offered by self-destruction.

Within the last fifty years the world has broken

through into an entirely new stratum of existence, and the field is everywhere strewn with wreckage and beclouded with smoke. The old order is gone; the new order has not yet taken full control. The fool standing by and watching the destruction of the old gods and the cutting down of the old groves, is saying in his heart, "There is no God." But the great mass of the people are really feeling after God more earnestly than ever before, "if haply they may find Him."

As a great religious writer of the last century has well put it:

> If you venture upon the quiet surface of error and are in sympathy with error, what is there to disturb the waters? What is there to strip off error's disguise? If you launch your bark upon the ever agitated but healthful waters of truth, you will encounter storms.

Progress invariably comes in one of two ways, either through suffering or understanding, generally through a combination of both. To-day the world seems to be learning, to a quite disproportionate extent through suffering, and this suffering takes the form of all manner of eruptions,

among which suicide occupies an evermore prominent place. Through great tribulation the world is entering the kingdom, but it is entering the kingdom. The suicide is only one of the casualties by the way.

But we cannot, of course, leave the matter there. We cannot leave the casualties untended, or relinquish our efforts to prevent them. The elderly man who went out alone to shoot himself under the stars of a California sky, knew little of these things, and if he had known more, would have cared less. What is to be done about it? What can be done to help this man and thousands like him in this awe-filled transition period to learn the great secret through understanding, rather than suffering? How are we going to find an outlet for that tremendous thwarted will to help, which wells up in the heart of millions when they read a story such as that of the suicide of Fort Funston?

A beggar comes to our door; he tells a pitiful story of hard luck. We hear him coldly and impatiently, for we have heard so many stories like

this before, so many untrue stories, and we know how many men and women earn a living and a luxurious living in just this way. We get rid of him as quickly as we can. Next morning he is found not far from our house, a suicide, leaving behind him a pitiful note of despair. He had tried and tried and tried and had failed.

"Good gracious!" we growl to ourselves. "If I had only known it was as bad as that!"

But then we never do know, and there is no possible way that any one can find out and be sure. If he had told us, this man, that he was going to kill himself, we should have construed it as a threat, or have been roused against him as a coward. What *is* to be done about it?

I remember, years ago, a short editorial, apropos of some notable and particularly pitiable case of suicide, that appeared in one of the London papers. It was entitled "Tunnels." I recall very little about it, save that it aroused much of comment, and contained this one great thought: "If only people would realize when they are passing through a hard time, no matter how hard, that

they are merely passing through a tunnel, and that to jump out of the train in the middle of the tunnel neither mends nor ends anything, but only adds to the toil and the tears, and postpones what is, in any case, inevitable: an ultimate reëmergence into light." Those are not the exact words, of course, but so it was in effect.

The simile has always seemed to me a strikingly just one, for it holds every way. The longer, the darker, the more sulphurous the tunnel, the more certainly is a leap from the train a leap from the frying-pan into the fire. At that moment, for us, there is no better 'ole.

Such counsel, moreover, is far from being the counsel of despair. For the tunnel is not really something pestilential into which our sorry fortune has led us, but something that actually constitutes for us *a short cut* to the light, at the other side. It all depends on our outlook on life. If we regard life as something that has a beginning and an ending, and believe that the years between the beginning and the ending constitute for us all there is to it, and that of these years a third is

spent in growth, a third in maturity, a third in decay, and that, of these three thirds together, a full third is spent in sleep, a twenty-fourth in dressing and undressing, a twelfth in eating and a sixth in amusement or in mere movement from one place to another, all the rest of the time being devoted to earning the wherewithal to enable us to continue doing these things,—to sleep, to eat, to dress and to play, but especially to sleep,—and if we further believe that death constitutes a sure release from it all, then the dictate of wisdom would be to hail death as a friend.

But if, on the other hand, we regard life as an infinite progression in which there are really no hardships, or trials, or mistakes, but only experiences, in which the habits, the customs, the prejudices, the modes of everyday existence are but the script in which the story is being written, and have in themselves no more intrinsic connection with the eternal reality which we call life than letters to thoughts, then we shall begin to make discovery of great facts. We shall discover what the Preacher discovered two thousand years ago, that

as a man thinketh in his heart so is he, and what Shakspere enunciated twenty-seven hundred years later, that there is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so.

It all depends on the hope that is set before us. If the expectation is sufficiently desirable, sufficiently sure, sufficiently settled, it is sufficient to offset the troubles of attainment, and to insure that attitude of mind which is ready, able, and willing to endure to the end.

In the days of far away and long ago, before the dawn of the industrial age, the automobile, the telephone, the telegraph, the radio, before free education, when heaven was heaven and earth was earth, when the fact of an angel with wings was never questioned, and the vision of the Almighty seated on a great white throne was accepted by the many as one of the great realities of life—in those days, everything was in its place and everything in order and everything explained. It was the age of innocence, and the road from the age of innocence to the age of understanding inevitably passes through the valley of doubt.

It is just here where the world to-day is finding itself. Fighting every step of the way against its own deliverance, it is being forced to come out from under the rule of persons into the rule of Principle. It turns with a laugh and a gesture of defiance from its old Cæsars, but has not yet realized that a greater than Cæsar is here. It is this real presence, now so largely appearing as a tormentor,—as one who goes about stirring up the people, setting everybody by the ears, sons against fathers, daughters against mothers, calling in question the most unquestioned things, casting down authority, holding up to derision time-honored sentiments and laughing them to scorn,—it is this very presence of Truth, of *that which is*, which, when it has overturned and overturned and overturned all that must be overturned, will ultimately appear as the Prince and the Saviour.

The very urgent need of the hour is the hastening of this day; in plain language, the acceptance by the individual of the fact that his new-found liberty from the tyranny of authority can find permanence only as it is predicated on the service

of Principle, which is perfect freedom. In the old days the hope of heaven above was sufficient, very often, to bridge over the troubles of the earth beneath. In these days heaven, recognized for what it is, *a state of mind*, has come down to earth. In the words of the Man who knew more about it than any one else, "The kingdom of God is within you."

The whole world is passing through a tunnel, and while some few are rejoicing that they are on their way, vast numbers are still in doubt and in fear and trembling. Then when individual fears are added to this world-fear, some there are whose hearts fail them; and with a sob of despair they follow in the path of the man who gave up.

Yet the remedy lies, always, in holding on, and the great new work for the missionaries of the new era—*the new reality*—is to broadcast this fact, "strengthening the weak knees and the hands that hang down," with ever clearer glimpses of the glory to be revealed, not hereafter, "in the world that is to come," but in the world that is now. So,

as the way is opened and humanity climbs higher, in place of the man who gives up will more and more be found the man who thinks better of it, the man who holds on, the man who wins through.

Chapter XI

THE DEFEAT OF THE LAST ENEMY

WE STILL HOLD
THE SECRET FOR WANT
OF WHICH THE WORLD IS
LIVING IN THE SHADOWS, AND
FOR WANT OF WHICH LIFE FOR
MOST GOES ON SONGLESS AND UNSANCTIFIED.
—*The Impatience of a Parson.*

MANY years ago, when I was at the dangerous age, rising nineteen or twenty, I remember once wandering like a lost soul at the back of a concert hall, during the rendering of Parry's "Job," plunged into the depths to think that in less than a hundred years not a soul in that room would be alive. A swift kick, you will say, would have done me a world of good, and so, no doubt, it would. No doubt the comment of the *Mens Sana in Corpore Sano* that such thoughts "is jest morbidness" is also justified. I left them behind me long ago. I have laughed at myself often because of them, but never, when I got down to the plain Jane and

no nonsense, in my outlook on life, have I failed to recognize that the problem which presented itself to me thus forcibly, many years ago, had ceased to trouble me, not because I had solved it, but only because I had turned away from it.

Several years later, in London, I was walking one Sunday evening in the neighborhood of Westminster Abbey. It was in the days when Wilberforce was rector of St. John's, and every Sunday evening, week after week and month after month, on through the years, would stand at the top of the chancel steps a spare, kindly figure, and just talk, for half an hour or so, to those who came to hear him. On this particular evening, as I passed through one of the little echoing side streets which surround the Abbey, out into the Sunday evening quiet of the Sanctuary, I decided I would go to hear Wilberforce. And so I went. His subject that evening was Death. One passage has always remained with me.

Death, he said, had always seemed to him very much like setting out on a long sea voyage to a distant country. The watchers on the shore saw

the ship standing out to sea, growing smaller and smaller, as it neared the clear-cut horizon line. At last it reached that line, and next moment had sunk quietly behind it—and was gone. In all the sea and sky there was now no voice nor any that answered. But the voyager on board the ship was conscious of no change; he was conscious of no line, no moment when he disappeared from view. He went on with the friends he had about him, to the distant country, and there lived, and loved, and enjoyed as before.

Well, this statement of Wilberforce's made a tremendous impression on me at the time. It had a really dynamic effect on my thinking. As I went about my daily business I would be vaguely conscious of some thought, somewhere, to which I could return with satisfaction. I felt as I used to feel when as a small boy I had something special to look forward to. It was a genuine only three days and two nights to Saturday kind of feeling, and I always found that it was caused by the thought of the ship passing over the horizon line and me on board knowing nothing about it.

At last it began to interest me for its own sake, and I started to analyze it. Why should this idea have so happifying an effect upon me? After much debate I finally came to the conclusion that it was for no other reason than because such a view of things seemed to send a ray of light, no matter how small and feeble, into the unknown.

It is, of course, a platitude to say that the fear of death is the fear of the unknown in extremis. To the human mind there is nothing more utterly unknown or apparently unknowable than what really happens the first hour after death. The supreme solace of every religion has always lain in the explanation it offered as to the nature of this experience, and just in proportion as these explanations have been accepted and believed has the fear of death been mitigated. And yet it remains the supreme fear, the last enemy, and the determination to resist it to the uttermost is entrenched as the great demand of the human race.

In spite of the fact that most religions promise a life hereafter incomparably better than this present life, every human being avoids as long as

he can the portal which is supposed to give access to it. As the Irishman put it, "Sure, I want to go to hiven when I die, and sure I know that hiven is a grahnd wide place, but if any one told me I'd be in hiven next week, I'd take it unkindly."

Why?

Well, because the Irishman, like the rest of us, really *knows* nothing about it.

Patrick had sat by the bedside of his friend Michael up to the very last. At six-thirty of the clock, just as the moon was rising over the bog, and the lights were beginning to appear in the cabin windows in the village "away beyant," Michael had been talking to him. He had spoken about the potatoes that had to be lifted soon, about the ould sow—the crature—that was doing wonnerful foine in the bit meadow by the barn; about the turf that was already laid by for the winter—

And then, suddenly, Michael had stopped speaking, and next moment Patrick knew he would never speak again.

As he stood by the bedside crossing himself, he

had dumbly wondered where Michael was. It was a cold night to be going out, and the wind and the cloud coming up from the south. Next moment he was taking himself to task. It was playin' a harp he was,—Michael that had never played anything—playin' a harp, and angels a-settin' around listenin' to him. That was it, surely. But it was not long before the doubt was back again. Where was Michael, and where was he going, and what was he doing and whom was he talking to? At six-twenty-five he had known all about Michael; at six-thirty he knew nothing about him. What would Michael really be doing now, for the next hour?

Countless millions, through the ages, have stood where Patrick stood, and asked that question. Is there any prospect that it will ever be answered?

Well, there are certain things about it that any one who will stop for a moment to think can see for himself. The most outstanding of these is the inability of the human mind to envisage any state of consciousness but its own. When trying to form an idea of what a beetle thinks about it, it tackles

the question, inevitably, from a human point of view. It draws a human foot to scale, and shows how gigantic it would have to be if the human were to see it in the same way as a beetle. When as a matter of fact the beetle is, in all probability, seeing something entirely different, just as the human does when he looks at a scrap of cheese under a powerful microscope.

And so it is, of course, with human life and the material world as a whole. In spite of the fact that our concept of things is constantly changing, we are always confident that the view we have of it at the moment is the true one, at last, and we are quite willing to laugh at all former concepts as absurd and amazing. There is no surer way to raise a laugh than to hand round from the family album a family group taken in the gay nineties, or even much later still. Yet we, maybe, are the same people who endured, unruffled and often with soulful admiration, these "enormities"—for so we style them—of twenty years ago.

How could we ever have *worn* such things?

How could we, indeed? The only trouble is

that twenty years from now either we or our children will be saying the same thing about the fashions of to-day, thus proving anew the truth of the old saying that beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder. The eyes of twenty years ago saw these things as beautiful, daring, up-to-the-minute. The eyes of to-day, looking at *the same things*, say they are monstrous, absurdly "modest," and dowdy beyond words.

Such transient, capricious reactions can surely have no basis in any *principle*, in any permanent consciousness. Quite evidently, there is to them no more substance or reality than the figments of a *dream*, and this, it seems to me, is the key to the problem.

From time immemorial, most poets and many philosophers have so characterized the whole of human life. Says Calderon the Spaniard:

> What is life? A mere illusion,
> Fleeting pleasure, fond delusion,
> Short lived joy that ends in sadness,
> Whose most constant substance seems,
> But the dream of other dreams.

Was he right? The "plain, practical common-sense man" throughout the centuries, has, it is true, uniformly dismissed such ideas with an easy laugh as the vaporings of visionaries. But are they?

An interesting question, at least, as it seems to me, is this: If we were so to regard life, should we find it easier to understand not only life but death? Should we, by resort to analogy or in any other way, be thus enabled to project any beam of light beyond the threshold, be able to form any concept of what Michael was doing and thinking at six-thirty-five?

Well, suppose, for the sake of argument, we do assume that life *is* a dream, and that death—clearly, as far as we can see, the end of the dream—is the awakening. What, on any basis of analogy, should we expect death, the awakening, to be and to bring? Let us consider a moment a specific sleeping dream. Almost any dream, vividly enough recalled, will serve our purpose. Here is one I had a little time ago, as near as I can bring it to mind.

I was in a great city somewhere in Russia, in a magnificent but dimly lighted room. A revolution was in progress, and a sound of fighting and shouting came up from the street below. I took it all as a matter of course. The synopsis of the story at the moment that I mentally entered in upon it—in other words, began my dream—was that for days I had been fleeing before a storm of revolution, that I had taken refuge in this house, formerly the palace of a Czarist nobleman, that a favorite aunt of mine had been captured by the revolutionaries, and was to be guillotined in an adjoining room at five-thirty, and that it was up to me to keep the news from my aunt's young daughter until after the execution had taken place. This child was with me in the large dimly lighted room, and I was being hard put to it to calm her fears and keep her amused.

I watched the clock as the hands approached the appointed hour. I experienced all the emotions one would expect to experience, and then I suddenly became conscious that the hour was past, and the deed was done. With that the scene im-

mediately changed. The daughter had grown up, knew what had happened to her mother, and I was leading her from the room toward what should have been the death chamber. I did not, however, expect to find my aunt dead. I started off with the clear understanding that guillotining meant having your head cut off. But now my concept had changed. As I went toward the door of the room in which I knew my aunt was, I felt as one might who was going to visit a friend just out of the anæsthetic after a serious operation.

When we entered the room, my aunt was sitting bolt upright in a chair. She did not speak to us, but she was evidently quite alive. I was conscious that her neck would of course be stiff, and I looked for the little white mark which was—so I seemed to know—a sure indication that she had been guillotined.

Just then there was a terrible clamor in the street below, and I knew without being told that it was the revolutionaries returning. I rushed to the door to lock it, but they were there before me,

and just as one of them was preparing to cut me down, had indeed struck at me, I awoke.

And it was all a dream.

My aunt, I recalled with thankfulness, was alive and well. We had had a letter from her the day before, from a mountain resort where she and my twelve-year-old cousin were having the time of their lives. And I—I was at least six thousand miles away from the nearest Russian city, and, best of all, I was alive and well, and none of the things that were supposed to have happened to me had happened to me; it was all a dream.

But suppose it had not been all a dream. Suppose these very experiences, rectified here and there to make them conform more nearly to accepted concepts, had actually been mine, as they were, in some form, those of tens of thousands of victims of the Russian revolution. Suppose I had actually been a refugee in a Russian city, hunted by a howling mob; suppose my aunt had actually been seized, and done to death; suppose that I, in trying to shield her daughter, had really been struck down, and that I had died—

in other words, awakened. What should I have found? I do not know, but is it not at least *conceivable* that my sensations would have been similar to those on waking from the sleeping dream? The very first of these, if the analogy is to hold good, would have been one of having awakened to a sense of existence *not in any way strange but, on the contrary, blessedly familiar.* The experiences preceding death, or the awakening, would have been recognized as a dream, and life would have stretched out behind me and ahead of me in unbroken continuity, embracing, in its story associations, experiences and unfoldments unsuspected and undreamed of in the *waking* dream which I had called life.

The sleeper has awakened—from a dream of terror. Hastily, eagerly, thought reviews the situation. No, this is not hurt. . . . No, she is all right. . . . No, that is not so. . . . It was all a dream. And there flows into consciousness a new and blessed assurance. The continuity of life is restored. The events of last night are joined up with the life of the morning, and all that happened in

between was a dream. And then we laugh at it. What a *dream* it was, to be sure! And soon it is forgotten.

But while we were *in the dream*, nothing was questioned. The friend with whom I am going on a journey may change a dozen times—now a father, now a brother, now the man who keeps the drug store at the corner. Anon, without any thought of strangeness, he becomes a brother again, and suddenly there descends upon us a feeling of impending disaster; there is a sound of rushing water; and, turning a sharp bend in the road, I see him being swirled away in the eddies of a raging torrent. And then, suddenly, I am awake. And of course he is not being swept away anywhere. He is in an adjoining room, taking a bath. Yes, that was the rushing water. And we laugh. But we did not laugh in the dream; all was serious, unquestioned, tragic. But now we are awake, and laughing, because it was a dream.

Is that what Michael was doing just after six-thirty? The sick-bed, Patrick, the cabin, the potatoes, the ould sow—the crature—the pile of

turf in the lean-to, and he dying, all a dream, and he, Michael, surrounded on all hands *not by strangeness* but by dear and familiar scenes, which appeal to him at every turn as being, of course, the reality of persons, places, and things he had known in the dream which he had called life?

The only thing he misses are the friends who seemed to be alive when he died, the friends he left behind him. Over there he sees Dan Ryan, who, in that dream he had, had died over a year ago. But he cannot see Patrick anywhere. He does not, however, expect to see him; somewhere he knows that Patrick is still asleep, a perfectly natural and wholesome condition; that he, Michael, has merely awakened before him, just as Dan Ryan has done before him, and that one day soon Patrick will awake. He has no sense of separation, any more than the man who is up betimes feels that he is separated from his friends who are still asleep.

Well, the objection, of course, to this analogy is the fact that the dreams we have in sleep do not advance in any respect our understanding of be-

ing. We are no better off because of them when we awake, and if this were to be true of what we call life, it would be impossible to conceive of an intelligent scheme of things involving such futility. We are groping in the dark here, it is true, but I think Calderon the Spaniard gives us the clue. The sleeping dream is the "dream of other dreams." It is reflected moonlight, itself a reflection of the light of the sun. It is of no value save to the extent that it shadows forth the true, or the more nearly true, showing us, as we awake daily from the dream of the dream, *what it will and must be like when we awake from the dream itself.*

In other words, in some way or other, this life, even if it is a dream, in a sense that it is another state of consciousness, must, unless all is futile, be a probationary period, a time in which that can be learned which will influence the next stage of consciousness, a time in which, if we learn truly, we can learn that which we shall never have to unlearn but can carry on unimpaired beyond the horizon line. Whatever is thus learned will be part of eternal life.

This brings us round, full circle, to the supreme question, *Is it possible to awake without dying?*

The answer to such a question seems to me to depend upon the answer to the questions indicated above. Is there any kind of thought or concept of things to which we can here attain, such as not only *may* be but *must* be good for all eternity? In other words, Is there any part of this life that we shall carry over into the next? any part of the dream that will be salvaged when we awake? In still other words, Is it possible in this phase of existence to begin to *accumulate* eternal life?

I know it is greatly daring, but one thing seems pretty certain, namely, that the first thing we shall learn in the first moment of the first hour after death is that *we did not die* but only thought or dreamed that we did. The fact that in the sleeping dream no one ever dreams that he actually dies has some instruction for us, the simple fact being, of course, that even in a dream the "I" never can say, "I am dead," for if it were dead, it could obviously say nothing.

If, however, we believe thoroughly in death

at the moment of dying, it seems reasonable to assume that the only thing we shall learn from dying, as from waking from a dream that we were killed, is that we did not die. We shall still have to work out the problem of death. For if in the night dream we dream that we are dying and wake to find that we are not, we learn nothing but that it was a dream and we believe firmly that we have still to die.

Supposing, however, we were to tackle this matter *here in this life*, and come by some glimpse of an understanding that death is really an *illusion*, having no possible place in infinite eternal life any more than twice two is five has place in mathematics; then, even if we appear to die, our first thought just after six-thirty would surely be: "I told you so. I am not dead."

I do not want to press this analogy too far, but all of us can recall dreams wherein we derived much comfort, *at the actual time of dreaming*, in the reflection that it was really all a dream. The question, then, is, Is it possible by so regarding this dream of human life to derive a similar com-

fort, here and now, not only with regard to death itself, but also with regard to all the other enemies to our happiness, of which death is the last and apparently the most inexorable?

For there can be no doubt that the mental misery occasioned by suffering of any kind is in direct proportion to the fear that lies behind it. The pain which we dismiss as negligible and quickly forget, so long as we are assured that it is nothing serious, becomes an agony if we believe that it is produced by a cancer. And so it would seem reasonable to assume that just in proportion as we stood convinced that human life—with its seemingly so concrete sorrows and misery, disease, and finally death—is only a false state of consciousness, steadily yielding to the pressure of the truth of being, and ultimately destined to be recognized for what it is and replaced by a condition infinitely more *real* and understandable—just in proportion as we were convinced of this would we experience its blessings.

It must, however, be conviction born of *understanding* and not of belief. Michael at six-twenty-

five might have believed that death was a dream. Michael just after six-thirty knows that it is. He knows not only that he is alive but that he has awakened and that to do so is a perfectly natural thing. Nothing surprises him or has to be explained to him. In that first hour after death, he does not go around exploring, gaping, and wondering in a strange land; he sees familiar sights and hears familiar sounds on all hands, and no one is any more surprised to see him than if they were greeting him in the morning after a night of sleep.

The question is, would such a state be a state of blessedness, a veritable millennial dawn? In this first hour after death does the heart leap up with the reckless assurance of a poor Susan?

> Don't mourn for me now! Don't mourn for me never! I'm going to do nothing for ever and ever.

Well, I think one may say of course not. As the Revelator very truly saw it, he that is unjust shall be unjust still. For as in our night dream our character, for the most part, runs true to form, so, it may be assumed, will it be in

the first hour after death and afterward, with this single difference, that with the tremendous experience of death passed, a tremendous blow will have been struck at our belief in death and of the actuality of that mortal, material, essentially limited consciousness of which death is the inevitable ultimate. Death, in and of itself, however, is the gateway to nothing save to a recognition of its own illusionary nature. It is not a friend but an enemy, for progress comes of an understanding of life and not of a belief in death.

The great demand, therefore, is to understand life, and the longest step toward the understanding of life is the recognition of the illusionary nature of death and the abandonment of the crippling belief that it is impossible to see beyond its illusionary barriers. The man of Tarsus, if it was indeed he, knew his human nature when he spoke of men "who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." The dissipation of this fear or even the lessening of it would result immediately, here and now, in an enlargement of human capacity at present undreamed of. For

with the recognition that death is an illusion would inevitably come the further recognition that everything leading up to death—the whole carnal or material mentality that *is* death—is an illusion also.

In other words, that life, truth, love, health, holiness, happiness, joy, peace, discernment, wisdom, honesty, everything good and constructive are the *facts* of being, the great twice two is four of infinity, while all the opposites of these are merely the twice two is five of the dream, the dream from which Michael awoke when he *died*.

And so I am brought back to my original question: Can we awake without dying? The answer, it seems to me, is that it is at least possible to conceive of this process of right seeing going on until no thoughts occupy consciousness but those that are true and so eternal; until, as the one man who is credited with having mastered death put it, "the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."

Just so far cold logic leads me, and there seems to leave me. And right here it was my first desire

to stop also. So far—as far as I could achieve it—life has been made to be its own interpreter. No appeal has been made to authority or to faith. Still less has any attempt been made to picture what Michael was actually doing and seeing and hearing at six-thirty-five, or what would be the manner of his appearance. I can, of course, find no rest for the sole of my feet in the land of Patrick's dutiful vision wherein Michael is seen playing a harp with the angels a-sittin' round listenin' to him. The terse common sense of the man of Tarsus comes rumbling into my ears down the centuries and forbids it—

> With what body do they come? . . . Thou fool. . . . that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

And then, it will be remembered, he goes on to tell in his vivid Eastern symbolism how this body is "sown in corruption" but "raised in incorruption," moving on to the inevitable conclusion:

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

And so I, if I instead of Patrick had been standing at the bedside of a much-loved Michael at six-thirty-five, I should have tried to say something like this. If it seems somewhat extravagant, I can only plead that there would be no one there to hear me.

"Michael," I should have said, "I greet you kindly. I do not know how you are seeing things, any more than I know how this little dog of yours that is sitting on its hunkers by your bedside is seeing things, but this one thing I know, Michael, that you are amid surroundings so *familiar* as to make your experience here seem like a dream.

"I dreamed last night, Michael, but I woke from my dream this morning. But I am still dreaming, as you were dreaming until ten minutes or so ago when it seemed that you died. But I know that you did not die but that you awoke from the dream, and what gives me joy at this mo-

ment, Michael, is that I do at last begin to see how it may be possible to *awake* without dying; how it may be possible to defeat the last enemy. I am already learning that twice two is four, and that all the mistakes that have ever been made about it through the ages, no matter how firmly they may have been held, no matter how brazenly they may have deployed themselves over countless smudged and tear-stained slates, have never altered the eternal fact waiting in silent benediction to greet us kindly the moment our eyes are opened, and we look up and see the angel of this *real* presence.

"And I go on, Michael, and I stand and say that good and life and love and joy and peace and health and wisdom and clear-sighted vision and infinite ability—all the infinite calculus of infinite good—are *real and eternal*, the great twice two is four of THAT WHICH IS, and that all else is *unreal* and temporal, outside of THAT WHICH IS, and therefore, necessarily, *that which is not;* in other words, Michael, just a mistake, a *dream.*

"I see this through a glass darkly, Michael, but

you are seeing it now face to face. That is what you are doing in this first hour after death,—I am sure of it,—standing and rejoicing in the fact that you have not died but that it was all a dream from which you have awakened to the blessedly familiar realization that all is life, and there is no death." . . .

"And the evening and the morning were the first day." And so it will be every day—until the seventh.

Chapter XII

WHAT CAN WE THEN BELIEVE?

THE REALISTS WHO
HAVE HAD EVERY CHANCE
HAVE MADE A PROPER MESS OF
THE WORLD. HOW OMINOUS THAT WE
SHOULD STILL RETAIN THEM IN THE SADDLE!
—*The Impatience of a Parson.*

AFTER not a little anxious thought, I have decided to include what follows in this chapter just as it was originally written. It is a battered and war-scarred piece of work, full of imperfections and repetitions, but after every re-writing and re-reading and striving to amend, the original version has "bobbed up serenely from below" as the best that I can do. And so I must let it go.

It was a strange experience that I want to write about, and one that I never recall without a sense of surprise. I have never been quite sure as to how I came to do it, but I did do it, and in this way: An artist friend and his wife, living in New York

City, invited me to supper one Sunday evening to meet a few friends and to have some music afterward. I gladly accepted. It was a delightful evening; a friendly, interesting supper party, followed by a satisfying hour or so of music, when the number of guests was augmented by a few additional friends, just dropping in, and thereafter a little group staying on and gathered round a blazing fire of logs and just talking.

How we got on the subject I do not know, but there was a young singer there, a man who had been studying in Italy for a year or more, and he had, he told us, been greatly interested in discovering how many of the Christian customs of the peasants were really pagan customs with Christian names, and how essentially pagan the Italian peasant really was. There was nothing new in the idea, of course; but he talked well, and painted his pictures with the hand of a true artist, and made the scene live before us. When he had done, some one else who was there spoke of how he had noticed the same thing in China, and how like some of the customs were those found in Christian

countries. Then there was some one from some other part of the world who had a very similar tale to tell, and so it went.

As I sat and listened, there came upon me suddenly an absurd determination—I do not know how else to describe it—to get to the bottom of things. Before I knew what I was doing, I had launched out with the question: "After all, what is fundamental religion?

"Oh, I know," I went on, with rather an uneasy laugh, "that there are whole volumes written on the subject, but I have always had a feeling that it ought not to be very difficult to answer such a question if we could once divest ourselves completely of every single thing we have been taught about it. The question to my mind is not 'What is religion?' but 'What *must* religion be?' I have always felt that we ought to be able to answer that question without reading a single book on the subject or appealing to a single tradition or a single authority. And then having determined what it must be, we ought to examine other religions and see how they measure up. If

they do measure up, well and good; if they do not, they can be of no use to us anyway."

I paused for a moment, but no one seemed to want to speak and every one seemed to want to listen, and so I went on.

And I went on and on.

Every now and again I would come down to earth, wondering if the company could possibly still be listening, but every time I so descended it was to find it apparently eager and alert and unwearied. And so I went on.

What we want, I remember saying, is a new conception of religion. There is only one that has ever satisfied me; it is this: "*Religion is the truth about everything.*"

The moment I have said that, I am of course confronted with an age-old question: "What is truth?"

Well, what is it?

There is only one answer as I see it; it is this: "Truth is *that which is.*" I do not seem to care for the moment what else it is, but it certainly is *that which is.* "Twice two is four" is that which is,

and: "Twice two is five" is that which is not. And all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot change the fact that twice two is four. All the power that ever was or can be is powerless in the presence of this fact to change it, as to the smallest fraction, even though the fate of empires depended upon the change being made. Nothing, moreover, will shake our allegiance to it. If the entire population of New York City were to march down Fifth Avenue declaring, "Twice two is five," we should not be moved thereby save to wonderment that the whole city should have thus gone mad. Truth, then, is that which is, however much or however little we may like it, and the great demand upon us is to discover what that which is, *is*. Can it be done?

Well, I wonder. There is only one thing I am quite sure of, it seems to me, and that is that I exist. If any one comes and tells me that I do not exist, that is for me the final proof that I do. You cannot tell a lie about nothing. You could not have a counterfeit dollar bill unless there had been a genuine dollar bill first. Therefore I know that

I exist. I cannot be sure about you or that fire over there, but I am sure about myself.

But then, how do I exist? Do I exist as cause or effect? Well, certainly I am not cause: therefore I must be effect, and, as effect, I must be like cause. Men do not gather figs of thistles nor grapes of thorns.

But what is cause? Well, cause, it seems to me, must be just what we are looking for; it must be that which is. And cause being that which is, it must be infinite. For if there could be anything outside of that which is, it would have to be that which is not, and so would not be at all, anyway. For the same reason cause must be good, for good is positive and it is impossible to conceive of that which is as being a negative quantity. If cause is good, then good must be infinite, and evil can have no *real* abiding-place. In infinite good, therefore, all that is good must find place—life, truth, love, health, happiness, and so on and so on; while all that is unlike these, being outside of *that which is*, must be *that which is not*.

Do I hear a thousand times ten thousand

throats being cleared, and two thousand times ten thousand feet being shuffled preparatory to a great rising to protest?

Yes, here it comes: "If good is all there is, then what do you make of this evil that I see all round me, this sin, this disease, this death, this poverty, this sorrow, this anger, this apparent infinity of all that is unlike good?"

My friends, I can make only one answer, namely this: If you will tell me where twice two is five comes from, then I must feel that a great demand is made upon me to answer your question. But then it does not come from anywhere; it simply is *that which is not*, and the forever fact that twice two is four is a forever law of annihilation to any supposition that it is or can be anything else.

The world is apparently full of twice two is fives, appearing as weary and heavy-laden men and women, sick and sinful, sorry, poor, and wretched, but right in the place where each one of these mistakes appears to us, right there is the forever fact of the correct answer, in this case

Man, the effect of cause, perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect—as *THAT WHICH IS* is perfect.

The very existence of a fact presupposes a lie about it. The very word "right" implies wrong: but the right is *that which is*, and the wrong is *that which is not*. The right is twice two is four, the wrong is twice two is five.

I cannot explain the origin of this evil.

I cannot *explain* twice two is five; I can never improve it; it cannot pass through any regeneration or convalescence; there is no way of tinkering or tampering with it; there is no balm in Gilead by which it may be healed, for the simple reason that *it is not*, and an understanding of this fact will destroy any belief that it is. The only sure corrective of *that which is not*, but seems to be, is *THAT WHICH IS*.

And here I seem to be confronted with a great difficulty. I see the world around me, and on all hands I notice that its essence is *limitation*, the beginning and the ending, the thus far and no farther,the birth, the growth, the maturity, and the

decay, an endless round. There is nothing in all of it to be compared for majesty and power to this least thing in the Kingdom of Spirit, this twice two is four, without beginning of years or end of days, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, with an untouched survival value after empires and universes have vanished away.

What am I to make of this world?

Oh, I know I hear another great army clearing its throat. I hear the opening of innumerable books, and I know that shortly there will come quotations from scores of great philosophers dead and gone—God rest their souls!—expounding and explaining, telling me all about matter and all about evil, and what not else besides. A fine effrontery I know I have, to say anything when so much has already been said. And yet there comes persistently to my thought the recollection of an absurd thing we used to like to do as children, much to the horror and scandal of our grown-up relations. Let me tell you about it. It has since seemed to me to contain the key to so much.

We discovered that by pressing the finger gently on the top of one eyeball, keeping both eyes open, we could make ourselves see double. We were, I remember, strictly enjoined from practising this art: many evil results, of which a permanent squint was the least, were enumerated for our admonition and warning. But we practised it none the less, as occasion offered. I had forgotten about it until one blusterous autumn afternoon, in later life, I was walking across a wind-swept Yorkshire moor, and in wiping the rain from my face I depressed one eye, after the approved fashion of our youth, and saw double.

Immediately this thought occurred to me:

Suppose I had been *born that way*, that it was, in fact, the way for people to be born, and that no one with single sight had ever existed. What would be our outlook on the world?

Well, we should have four hands and four feet. That much is sure. When we wrote a letter we should write two letters, with two hands, holding two pens; we should inclose it in two envelops and mail it in two mail-boxes. It would be

the same with everything else. We should be firmly convinced that everything existed in duplicate. We should have every evidence to prove it. If a man got drunk and saw single, we should think just the same about it as we do now about his seeing double. We should be just as convinced that single sight was an absurd illusion.

Having got thus far, this further thought occurred to me: If this outward and visible world is thus so obviously dependent for the manner of its existence *upon our view of it*, then is it not all *just a mode of consciousness?* And by so seeing it, could we not thus get it into the Kingdom of Spirit, of consciousness, where alone it could be permanent, and take honored place with twice two is four, in the world without end—and without beginning?

My slate is covered with figures; it is smudged and tear-stained: it is a terrible conglomeration of wrong answers, yet from all eternity the right answers have existed, ready to be revealed the moment I know enough for the revelation to be made.

And so it is, surely, with this world of ours.

Just as there is only one twice two is four, and it is infinite, so there is only one lily, only one rose, only one Shasta daisy, *but they are infinite*, and, as we see this more clearly, graduating from the dark glass to the face-to-face vision, our interpretation of them will be better, will rise in beauty and perfection until we see it all as the writer of Genesis saw it, when he said that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field *before* it was in the earth, and every herb *before it grew.*

Well, we seem to have traveled a long way, and yet it is not difficult to tie back. If God is cause, and cause is that which is, and that which is is all there is, then there can be *nothing* unholy, in any interpretation of the word the world has hitherto held, for God is all there is, and all there is is wholly holy. True, the very word "holy" implies the possibility of something unholy, but the unholy, the unclean, the impoverished, the snarled, the stunted, the vile, and the venomous are merely the twice two is fives of that great "twice two is four" which is man in the image

and likeness of God. The old gods are moving away across the golden bridge into the twilight of phantasy, and in their place is coming the realization of the all-in-all of Spirit, in which good is as immutable and unassailable, as utterly apart from the beliefs of time and change and chance as twice two is four is from the belief that it is five.

But how are we to make all this practical?

How are we to clothe these dry bones with a real presence? How are we to make it dynamic in our lives, and thus see it revealed as the very Christ or Saviour? It is not really difficult. The Carpenter of Nazareth, wrestling with the imagery of the East, hammers out these same truths to us in almost his every utterance. He proclaims God as Spirit: He maintains that Spirit alone quickeneth and that the flesh profiteth nothing: he demands perfection, no less: he insists that the devil is not only a liar but is himself a lie, a myth, an illusion, the great hocus-pocus, the inevitable twice two is five of reality.

According to all accounts he rode roughshod

over every material law, healed every form of disease, and easily and inevitably overcame death, the last enemy, the last illusion, the last great bluff of twice two is five, before the dawning realization that it is and forever has been four. According to all reports, he did all of these things, and if we had never heard these reports, yet, from our discovery of what religion *must* be we should have known that the man who practised this religion in its fullness must be fully and finally equipped to do all these things.

And even as we satisfy ourselves on this point, there crowd into our waiting thought statement after statement, by the man who knew, to confirm us in the position we have just taken up: "No man hath seen God at any time. . . . He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do." And this: "I and my Father are one"; and this: "The works that I do shall he ['he that believeth on me'] do also . . . because I go to the Father."

All of which, taken out of the imagery of the

East, and cast in the language of this common day is surely, just this:

"You cannot see Cause save through effect, but you can see effect, and in the beauty and the glory and the dominion of effect you can see the person of Cause. The effect can do nothing of itself, because effect and Cause are alike and inseparable, are in fact one. If you who also are effect, who also are sons, who are my own very brethren will only open your eyes, and look up, and see the angel of your great heritage, then the works that I do, the infinite unassailable twice two is four which I am forever demonstrating, you also can do and demonstrate."

Well, that is about all. I do not claim to have apprehended, far very far from it. I claim only this, very humbly, after the manner of the man of Tarsus, this one thing I strive to do:

Leaving those things which are behind, leaving the traditions of the elders, leaving the schools and the acts and the sons and the grandsons of the prophets, leaving the garbage piles of exposition and all the strange phantasies with which

through the ages the face of God has been blackened, in the stark consciousness of existence which is my one contact with the eternal, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, for my heritage as the effect of Cause, in which all that the Father hath is mine, in which all that Cause *is* forever remains for me to realize.

Chapter XIII

THE SEVENTH DAY

IT SEEMS PERILOUS IN
THE EXTREME TO SUGGEST
THAT RELIGION ALONE AMONG
VITAL HUMAN CONCERNS CANNOT RE-
PHRASE ITSELF IN NEW WAYS OF THOUGHT.
—*The Impatience of a Parson.*

"AND God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." In the allegory of Genesis, as the evening of the sixth day draws to a close, this is the summing up of the whole matter. From the first moment when the firmament of spiritual understanding begins to establish itself amid the voidness of belief, the birth of ideas goes forward, and the human mind peering forth in amazement sees glory added to glory, until at last in place of the dream of chaos and old night is found only the full radiance of spiritual reality, in which, forever and always, Spirit is substance, and everything is very good.

Such a vision, such an earnest of things hoped for is, surely, the great point of departure, the boundless basis from which we may go on, the churches and all of us, on into the *new reality*. This is, surely, the new heaven and the new earth in which dwelleth righteousness—right thinking, in which is seen to abide forever, here and now, not only the immaculate goodness of God but the immaculate goodness of His image and likeness, the real man and the real universe. This is the "city" into which can enter nothing that defileth or maketh a lie, because the bounds of it are the infinite, and there is nothing outside the bounds of infinity.

And here let me say something about what I can only call the bogy of time. One of the most deep-rooted convictions of the human mind is that the longer a wrong has obtained, the longer it must take to eradicate. As Mr. Sheppard justly puts it, "The phrase 'more haste less speed' has so gotten into our blood that the slower and more gradual a process the more surely we think it divine."

The exact opposite of this is true.

If a wrongly totaled column of figures had been found in the tomb of Tutankhamen it would have been no more difficult to correct the day it was discovered than the day it was made five thousand years ago. And so the change can be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. This was Jesus's method. Every mistake he corrected, whether it was a leprous man, a demoniac boy, or a raging sea, he corrected instantaneously. It is indeed, as Mr. Sheppard insists, impossible and sinful to believe that this state of things we deplore to-day cannot be altered within the lifetime of this generation. There is no need to say, Behold, four months and then cometh the harvest; there is only the urgent demand that we look up and see the fields already white.

I remember, years ago, when a young man troubled about many things, I went in my distress to a kindly old bishop of the Church of England, and told him my troubles. I could not see this, and I could not see that, and the more I wrestled with doctrine and interpretation the

more hopelessly involved I seemed to become. What could I do about it?

"Well, you know," he said to me, "I fear I am terribly unorthodox, but I long ago found comfort in this reflection, that, controvert it how you will, all my church asks of me is to believe in the ten commandments and the Apostles' Creed. It was all it asked of me when I was baptized, and it is all it will ask of me when I come to die. The ten commandments are really accepted by all Christian people and by countless millions besides. As to the Apostles' Creed, it is there for me to interpret as God gives it to me to interpret it, just as is the Bible. I do the best I can. You are free to do the same, and what you thus know is all that will ever be of any use to you. What I *believe* will never help me; what I *understand* is Emmanuel—God with me."

Much water has flowed under the bridges of my life since then. I have thrown aside much baggage that I once thought essential. I have wandered into many fields. I have, with what courage I could muster, envisaged many spiritual possi-

bilities; but I have never found the advice of the old English bishop to fail. I have always ultimately emerged at the point where the Apostles' Creed is my explanation of life. True, it is to-day a very different creed from what it was twenty years ago, but it is the same Apostles' Creed, only infinitely more glorified, "rephrased," for me at any rate, "in new ways of thought."

And so, as a last word, I say my creed:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in THAT WHICH IS and that THAT WHICH IS is all there is, necessarily infinite, necessarily good, necessarily Spirit, necessarily the perfect Principle of the perfect effect, the real man and the real heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord.

And in the man Jesus, who more than any other man understood and revealed the Christ; the only Son, the one perfect idea of the one perfect Principle, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, forever unfolding in infinite variety; our

Lord, our model, our inevitable, final achievement.

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary.

Whose advent in the flesh was made possible by the Holy Ghost, the pure exalted thought of a woman discerning, however dimly, that man is not flesh and blood but the infinite idea of infinite Principle.

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried.

Was condemned by the human mind and was crucified; and to every sense but his own sense—which could not for a moment be vanquished, because it was ever the victor—he died and was buried.

He descended into hell.

He plumbed the depths of every human experience, and found each one still the lie and the father of it, never the truth of being.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

The third day, his great work done, the illusion of death in the midst of infinite life demon-

strated, he shook himself free from the false belief of life in matter, and so, after a season, during which his vision brightened steadily toward fullness, finally and inevitably—

He ascended into heaven.

He reached the point where his outlook was entirely spiritual, and he understood, in its fullness, the "I" that is before Abraham.

And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

And having thus laid hold on reality, he is settled in understanding, and is forever seeing what he always saw in part that "I and my Father are one," and that "All that the Father hath is mine."

From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

From thence, from this understanding, the Christ is forever coming, lovingly imperious throughout all ages as the standard by which are judged and forced onward, not only the quick, those striving to move up higher, but those

dead in materiality, as yet unawakened to a glimpse of the perfection they must ultimately attain.

I believe in the Holy Ghost.

I believe in Truth appearing to me as the Holy Spirit, the divine idea, the new light, *the new reality.*

The holy Catholic Church.

The whole body of infinite Truth, founded on the rock of the grand confession. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Thou art the Saviour; thou who hast revealed to me the great fact that Principle and its idea are one, and I am that one, because, "All that the Father hath is mine."

The Communion of Saints.

The joyful recognition of the manifestation of the real man every step of the way.

The Forgiveness of sins.

The destruction of the belief in sin by a recognition of sin's impossibility in the infinity of THAT WHICH IS.

The Resurrection of the body.

The forever finding of man's true identity as the infinite idea of an infinite Principle.

And the Life everlasting.

THAT WHICH IS is all there is, without beginning of years or end of days.

AMEN.

So be it. So it always was; so it is now; so it always will be.

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